

FILMS FOR ART PROGRAMMÉS  
AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL

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## PREFACE

Instructional films are often used by art instructors to provide diversion from regular classroom routine, or they are tacked onto a unit of study as an afterthought or a means of rounding out a programme. All too often such films are projected without being previewed by the instructor and without introduction or follow-up. In fact, in a few instances the film's content may bear little relation to the subject matter currently being studied. In short, films have been used tangentially in many art programmes and therefore have not achieved their full educational potential.

This study seeks to provide the teacher with background to utilize film in a more knowledgeable manner as well as to establish the basis of a general art curriculum with film as its core.

Abstract

Catherine M. Egan.

Films for Art Programmes at the Secondary Level

This manual is designed to be used either as a curriculum guide or as a selected bibliography of films to develop aesthetic awareness. It is intended primarily for teachers of art at the secondary level but may also be useful for courses in art education or general education, and for in-service training workshops. The emphasis throughout is on film as a medium of artistic expression. As such, it covers the major areas of visual awareness, perception and attitude formation, the creative process, and the film medium per se. The criteria applied to selection have been those of originality of subject matter, technical excellence, and a quality which may be termed "humanizing." In the process of compilation, over three hundred films were screened and evaluated. Approximately one hundred of these were selected for inclusion in this manual.

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TABLE OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACI	ACI Productions
AMEDFL	American Educational Films
b&w	black and white
BF	Brandon Films
BFA	Bailey-Film Associates
BNCHMK	Benchmark Films, Inc.
CF	Churchill Films
CMC	Center for Mass Communications of Columbia University Press
CORF	Coronet Instructional Films
EAMES	Charles and Ray Eames
EBEC	Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation
FI	Films, Incorporated
GROFL	Grove Press--Cinema 16 Film Library
HP	Hartley Productions
HRAW	Holt, Rinehart, and Winston
IFB	International Film Bureau
IU	Indiana University
LCOA	Learning Corporation of America
MGHT	McGraw-Hill Text-Films
NBC	National Broadcasting Corporation Educational Enterprises

NF Norwood Films  
NFBC National Film Board of Canada  
NIT National Instructional Television  
PFP Pyramid Film Productions  
RFL Rembrandt Film Library  
SCRESC Screencope Productions  
SF Sterling Educational Films  
SIM Sim Productions, Incorporated  
SNYDBF Bill Snyder Films  
TIMELI Time-Life Films

## Introduction

Film is an exciting, involving medium and studies have shown that it can be a highly effective teaching device.<sup>1</sup> This is particularly true when it is used by an informed instructor and supplemented by discussion or follow-up activity. John M. Culkin, S. J., director of Fordham University's Center for Communications, recommends workshops, courses, and materials to familiarize teachers with the medium. He says, "The teacher training institutions have to be attuned to the media and the film, and communication departments have to realize that there is a new kind of client on their doorstep."<sup>2</sup>

This is not to imply that film is the ideal medium for every learning situation. For one thing, there can be no adequate substitute for the student-teacher relationship, or the exchange of ideas between individuals. Though film should not replace dialogue, it may serve to stimulate discussion. An on-the-spot demonstration may be more effective than a film depicting a particular technique or activity. Sometimes a combination of the two is appropriate. But as the authors of

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<sup>1</sup> Institute for Communication Research, New Teaching Aids for the American Classroom (Stanford: Institute for Communication Research, 1960), pp. 95-115.

<sup>2</sup> John M. Culkin, S. J., "Film Study: What Now, My Love?" American Film Institute Education Membership Newsletter, 1 (Summer, 1969), 9.

Need Johnny Read? point out, "film projection sometimes is used as an escape. . . a betrayal of the teacher's responsibility. . . crutches to compensate for ineffective instruction."<sup>3</sup>

Some areas of learning and experience demand the use of a visual image, either static or moving, more than others. The visual arts obviously fall into this category. In compiling this bibliography of films to be used to stimulate aesthetic awareness, I have attempted to suggest areas which particularly benefit from the use of the film medium. Most of the films have been selected not because they convey factual information, but because they capture experiences which might be transmitted in no other way to a particular group at a given time and in a given place.

The films in this bibliography have been grouped into four major chapters or areas. These areas are: "The Environment: Looking and Experiencing," "Perception: Forming Attitudes," "The Artistic Experience: Making It," and "Film: The New Art." The films in these four chapters, when taken together, form a complete course of study which encompasses stimuli for aesthetic awareness and creative activity, basic concepts and theories, studies of artists at work, and an introduction to the art of film. This approach is in keeping with the following objectives listed in An Instructional Guide for a Course in the Arts in the Secondary Schools:

1. To develop aesthetic sensitivity.
2. To cultivate independent artistic judgment.

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<sup>3</sup>Frederick Goldman and Linda R. Burnett, Need Johnny Read? (Dayton, Ohio: Pfaum, 1971), p. 136.



3. To explore the creative process.

4. To develop an awareness of the arts in a social context.<sup>4</sup>

Some justification for the inclusion of the chapter on film might be appropriate. It is the compiler's belief, based on classroom experience as well as the experience of working with both faculty and students in a university media center, that the study of film appreciation and, in some cases, filmmaking, are becoming an integral part of a dynamic art or humanities program. David Mallery, author of The School and the Art of Motion Pictures and Film in the Life of the School, draws attention to the fact that film, more than any other medium, is now fulfilling the magical and humanizing role of the arts.<sup>5</sup> It stands to reason that the more we learn to "read" this universal language of film, with its own particular vocabulary and variety of styles, the more we will be able to appreciate it and experience its magic.

In terms of format, each entry in this manual provides an annotation and statistical information: an abbreviated identification of the film producer or distributor (sales source), production or release date, running time, and an indication as to whether the film is black-and-white or color. A key to the distributor abbreviations is found in the section "Table of Abbreviations," preceding the Table of Contents.

<sup>4</sup> Fine Arts Advisory Committee, Working Paper, An Instructional Guide for a Course in the Arts in the Secondary Schools (Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: Department of Public Instruction, n. d.), pp. 4-5.

<sup>5</sup> David Mallery, "Film as a Fertility Magic in Our Lives," American Film Institute Newsletter, 1 (Summer, 1969), 7.

The annotations themselves provide a comprehensive summary of the film's content and, where relevant, notations on particular film production techniques. Descriptions, then, are more comprehensive than those found in the National Information Center for Educational Media (NICEM) Index,<sup>6</sup> Library of Congress catalogs, or distributors' handbooks. In fact, a number of the entries are not listed in the first two publications, due to inadequate cataloging or because the films are too recent to have been included.

In addition to descriptive and statistical information, suggestions for utilization are offered. Questions for discussion, as well as possible related projects, films, and books, are listed. An attempt has been made to give such material generalizability, so that the teacher may adapt it to the needs of the students. Each entry is self-contained and may be used effectively on its own as the basis of a lesson or as background or supplementary material. On the other hand, it will be seen that several series have been included. Some of these series, such as the Art of Seeing series distributed by Films Incorporated, provide a mini-curriculum in themselves. A series of classes involving discussion and/or studio work may be built upon such a structure. Films from one series may be alternated with films from another series, providing both teacher and class with a contrasting approach. Some teachers may prefer to use films only occasionally to highlight key areas in the art program.

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<sup>6</sup> Index to 16 mm Educational Films (2nd ed., New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1969); Index to 16 mm Educational Films (3rd ed., Los Angeles: University of Southern California, 1971).

## Rental Sources

The major source of 16mm films in Canada is the Canadian Film Institute in Ottawa. The Film Library contains over 10,000 films on educational, scientific, and cultural subjects. It handles film sales, representing major distributors from North America and abroad, and publishes Film Canadiana, a bilingual quarterly publication listing television programs and films available in Canada. It also provides a film study center and a National Film Theatre which presents year-round weekly repertory programs of both film classics and films not otherwise available in Canada. Film catalogs are available at no charge and many of the films may be obtained for a moderate rental fee or service charge (average cost \$5--\$15).

Organizations using a considerable number of films during the year may apply for a contractual arrangement providing a preview service or bulk film use. Under this arrangement, organizations are invoiced each quarter for films used on a flat-rate basis, and films may be retained for one week as opposed to the usual one day use. For further information and costs on film services, apply to

The Canadian Film Institute  
1762 Carling St.  
Ottawa 13

For specific information concerning films on art, enquiries should be addressed to the Canadian Center for Films on Art, P. O. Box 457, Ottawa 2. A listing of films and television programs on art produced throughout the world is available at minimal cost.

In many areas of the United States, regional instructional materials centers serve a number of school districts. A per capita charge for

pupil makes the film resources of the center available to participating institutions.

Many universities throughout the country have extensive film collections and these films are often available on a moderate charge basis to educational institutions and organizations in the surrounding state or states. An experimental Directory of College and University Film Libraries in the United States was recently published by Indiana University. This directory attempts to provide the following information for each of the two hundred and fifty-six institutions included: name of institution, mailing address, name of person-in-charge; telephone number, geographical and user eligibility restrictions, number of film titles and prints owned, frequency of catalog and supplementary publications, policy regarding the free and controlled circulation of these publications, age level and subject area specialization for the collection. Requests for this directory should be sent to Allen Mirwis, Audio-Visual Center, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

In addition, a number of large commercial film distributors make their films available for rental as well as for purchase. In general, these rates will be somewhat higher than those charged by educational institutions.

A vast number of feature film distributors exists. Many of these also have programs of short films which may be rented by film societies. Most of these companies publish frequent promotional catalogs and listings, which are available without charge on request.

## Rental Procedures

A list of films desired, along with suggested use dates, should be submitted to the rental agency. Orders should be placed well in advance (four to six months is advisable) since many rental libraries receive bookings on films as much as eight months in advance, and many films are in constant circulation. Teachers are well advised to suggest alternate dates and titles. This saves time spent in correspondence and facilitates matters for both booking personnel and customers.

Rental procedures vary from school to school. Some school districts or individual schools have audio-visual directors who provide a direct link with large film collections. Others have their own regional centers which supply a certain number of popular and much-used films. Most sources supply catalogs with pertinent information, order blanks, etc., for customers' convenience. Information on rental procedures should be studied carefully. Generally, after placing an order, the customer will receive a confirmation, upon receipt of which a purchase order bearing the school's letterhead will finalize the booking.

Money allocated for film programs differs from district to district. When renting films, teachers should always allow for incidental expenditures, such as return mailing costs and increased rental rates, which may be subject to change without notice. Occasionally, customers may be required to pay all mailing costs and insurance.

## CHAPTER I

### THE ENVIRONMENT: LOOKING AND EXPERIENCING

Few people are born artists. In fact, many individuals, by the time they reach adolescence, have discovered that they lack facility in drawing or in handling brushes and paint. Perhaps in primary or elementary school they did not think in terms of accuracy or a "right" way of doing things, but only in terms of enjoying the materials and the activity. But with the advent of adolescence, with its attendant peer pressures and acute self-criticism, not to mention parental criticism or expectations, too many students become aware of their lack of technical skill and are less concerned with what they convey in a given medium than with how they do it. Too often this results in artwork which is slick and superficial or which reflects current fads, rather than the individual.

For this reason many art educators feel that art programs in high schools should provide alternatives to the studio or the art history approach. In short, they should provide something for everyone. How many students are interested in pursuing art as a career? How many want or need a chronological history of art? Art and its appreciation and enjoyment are not (or should not be) limited to those who create works of art, or to the art critic or historian. And yet most programs in the schools have been and still are heavily studio oriented. This

is fine for those students who want to engage in creative activity, but for those who do not, other alternatives should be provided. Otherwise the existing gap between art and society will only widen, resulting in a society where an artistic elite has a monopoly on culture and the man in the street is left to find his own way. In an age of increasing leisure time, it would be a shame to deprive the layman of what might very well bring great joy and continuing satisfaction.

As mentioned in the Introduction, the educational institutions must realize that the mass media have created a new kind of student. This is a visually oriented generation, nurtured on television and the movies far more than on books and paintings. Consequently, visual perception plays an increasingly important role in the educational process. What does this imply for the art educator of the 'seventies?

Obviously it suggests that the visual medium of film should be exploited as a teaching device. This includes the use of both instructional film and film as art. It will also be clear that the teacher must be visually literate in order to help the student to develop his powers of perceiving. Aldous Huxley, in an essay entitled "Education on the Nonverbal Level," states:

All our mental processes depend upon perception. Inadequate perceiving results in poor thinking, inappropriate feeling, diminished interest in and enjoyment of life. Systematic training of perception should be an essential element in all education.

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<sup>7</sup> Aldous Huxley, "Education on the Nonverbal Level," in *Revolution in Teaching: New Theory, Technology, and Curricula*, Banham Book (New York: Banham Books, Inc., 1962), p. 73.

Huxley goes on to describe this training as one of "watching and receiving in a state of perfect ease or wise passiveness."<sup>8</sup> What he calls "wise passiveness" is a positive rather than a neutral condition. Dewey talks about the same state when he defines perception as "an act of the going-out of energy in order to receive, not a withholding of energy."<sup>9</sup>

Many psychologists contend that perception plays such an important role in human development that in fact man is what he perceives. A prevalent emphasis in schools today is placed on an interdisciplinary or humanities approach which seeks to mold the perceptions through stressing the relatedness of the arts and sciences. The films in this chapter have been selected first of all because of their sheer visual impact, which of course is the essence of film; second, because they draw on powerful and universal human experiences such as the mysteries of time, life and death, the beauty of the natural world, and the potential of the human mind; and third, because in some way or another, they and the experiences they represent may be applied to an increased awareness of human endeavor, which in this situation may be defined as art.

Through the eye of the camera it is possible to isolate from the vast environment elements which when combined present a particular world view. This view may be highly personal or it may be universal in scope. There are examples of both included in this chapter. Kevin, an example

<sup>8</sup> ibid., p. 76.

<sup>9</sup> John Dewey, Art as Experience, Capricorn Books (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), p. 35.



of the first view, isolates the world of a ten-year-old blind boy. We are made to see the world through Kevin's non-eyes. Ironically, as we see how important the other senses are to him in his interpretation of the world around him, we are conscious, because of the visual impact of the film itself, of all that he is missing. In films like Time Is and Powers of Ten we are taken out of ourselves and into other realms where earth laws of time and measurement do not apply. And in other films, such as those in the Art of Seeing series or the Images and Things series, the visual elements have been selected to illustrate basic principles or concepts such as light and movement which are common to both nature and art.

The beauty of using film in the art curriculum lies in that it may be used on its own to make a statement, or it may be used in conjunction with other films or experiences to work toward a particular teaching objective. For instance, Kevin might well be paired with The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They? for a discussion of the role of sight in aesthetic awareness. Or it might be shown with Discovering Texture, and followed by a studio session where students were blindfolded and encouraged to explore textures. As the teacher gains experience in using film, new approaches will become evident.

Two series have been included in this chapter. The first, entitled The Art of Seeing, is a fifteen-film series on visual perception, beginning with the simplest concepts and moving to the more sophisticated. The idea for the series originated with Alice H. Kaplan, President of the American Federation of Arts, and is being developed with Rudolf Arnheim, Professor of the Psychology of Art, Harvard

University, as consultant, and advisor. Two units are completed. Unit I includes the titles The Art of Seeing, Light, Color, Shape, and Movement. Unit II includes Abstraction, Space, Figures, Same Subject--Different Treatment, and Composition. All of the films in these two units are described in this chapter, along with suggestions for utilization and related films. In addition, the series includes Teacher's Resource Manuals which provide explanatory essays, discussion questions, and involvement activities. These manuals may be obtained by writing to the distributor:

Films Incorporated  
 Education Division  
 1144 Wilmette Avenue  
 Wilmette, Illinois 60091

Unit III is currently in preparation. Titles of individual films are Balance, Rhythm, Distortion, Part and Whole, and Line, Surface, and Volume.

The second series is entitled Discovering Art. These ten films deal with basic principles and elements of art. The primary emphasis is on relating nature and formal aesthetics. For instance, each film shows how a particular element such as line, texture, color, or harmony can be seen in nature, and how it may be seen in functional and artistic manmade objects. In doing so, the films juxtapose museum pieces and shots of nature and human activities to show the relation of art to life. The films may be shown singly or in series. Each is self-contained but relates in a general way to the others. For instance, Discovering Creative Pattern also touches on line, light, color, texture, and shape. Since the films are similar in format and content

consistent in quality (in fact, a possible drawback in using the entire series lies in this sameness of format, narration, musical accompaniment, and general pacing) no attempt has been made to provide extensive reviews of content and technique. The series was produced by Paul Burnford Associates, often in association with Jack Stoops, Ed.D. The films are competently made and points are made clearly. Unfortunately, the narration tends to be somewhat patronizing. For this reason, the films may be more acceptable to junior high school students than to older teenagers.

The films in both the Art of Seeing and Discovering Art series are listed alphabetically by title in the body of this chapter.

## Abstraction

Abstraction uses a minimum of technical explanation and well-chosen visual examples drawn from everyday life to show how abstraction is all around us, organizing and simplifying man's experience. It is seen that although a round shape can belong to an apple, a plate, or a wheel, the shape itself is an abstraction. Numbers, too, are abstractions; in other words, they stand for a real thing. Animated shapes illustrate how various kinds of movement such as animals' gaits, bicycle wheels turning and people jumping, may be abstracted. Traffic lights and signs eliminate everything but the essentials which are needed to convey a message; such abstraction results in clarity of impact. Abstractions may be achieved by eliminating everything which is ~~not~~ essential. Elements which may be removed to simplify an image are color, detail, and movement. An effective sequence shows colorful skaters gliding across a rink. The scene is abstracted first by removing all color. Next, all detail is removed, and the pattern becomes less obviously a group of people and more an abstract composition. Finally, movement is eliminated and the viewer is left with an abstraction of the original scene. Another sequence illustrates how the camera can be used to make abstractions by freezing motion, removing color, reversing tonal contrasts, etc. Comic strips and animated cartoons also make considerable use of abstraction to express action. "Popeye" serves as an example. In conclusion, the film suggests that in the realm of painting and sculpture abstraction often results in clarity of expression. Primitive carved masks, Picasso's "Guernica," and

efforts of the Impressionist and Expressionist schools, all show the importance of seeing the difference between the essential and the non-essential. Abstraction concludes with the statement "the world around us is more concerned with how something looks than with what it actually is." Live footage of sun glancing on running water, reflections, shadows, and city lights bear this out. In each case, it is the image or the abstraction which holds the attention, and not the total landscape. Paintings are matched effectively with live footage in this segment. For instance, thick snow falling in a wood bears a striking similarity to one of Jackson Pollock's off-white abstractions.

FI 1968 10 minutes color.

#### Utilization

This film will help students to grasp the idea of abstraction. It will help to develop their critical faculties and increase their visual awareness. In addition, it will prove to be a useful introduction to abstract art, since it shows that abstraction is not a modern phenomenon, but has been an important factor in the art of all ages, from the earliest cave paintings right up to minimal art.

#### Questions

1. What is the difference between a thing and an abstraction?
2. In what sense is every work of art an abstraction?
3. Do you think that abstraction results in clarity? How does abstraction influence the subject matter of Picasso's "Guernica"?
4. In what ways may abstraction be achieved?

Related Films

Chromophobia

The Dot and the Line

Meaning in Modern Painting: Parts I and II

Who Is: Victor Vasarely

## Art and Motion

Art and Motion is a relatively old film which holds up surprisingly well, primarily because of its superior photographic quality, refreshing musical accompaniment, and broad scope. It demonstrates the relationship between movement in nature (as shown by some excellent shots of cloud patterns moving rapidly over the rolling surfaces of hills and rain falling on the surface of a lake), in space-time concepts, and in abstract art forms. A skater and a dancer, a particularly amusing bird engaged in a mating dance, and exploding fireworks and rockets depict movement in nature. Stop-motion photography enables the viewer to perceive the movement more clearly. High speed photography is used to show movement in time and space. It is seen that movement is created in various ways by painters (Kandinsky, Balla, Van Gogh), in mobiles (Calder, Usher), and in camera techniques (sequences shown from Elwood Dacker's Color Fragments). Painting and scratching on motion picture film creates movement on the screen. Individual frames show patterns which may be studied on their own as compositions. The film also deals with the subjective feelings created by particular forms of movement. It concludes with shots of manmade mobiles superimposed on natural forms, such as a branch with its leaves moving gently in the breeze.

EBEC

1952

16 minutes

color

### Utilization

Art and Motion may be shown as an introduction to the construction of mobiles or kinetic sculpture. It provides material for discussion of

movement in filmmaking. For painting classes, it suggests ways of depicting movement within a static, two-dimensional framework.

#### Questions

1. What is kinetic or moving sculpture?
2. Name several kinds of movement. How do they vary from one another?
3. Is movement in art limited to things which actually move?

#### Related Films

#### Discovering Line

#### Movement



### The Art of Seeing

This appealing film provides a brief introduction to the Art of Seeing series. Strictly motivational in intent, it stimulates the viewer to look around him at the beauty which is to be seen everywhere. In short, it attempts to develop aesthetic awareness. The viewer's attention is drawn to five basic elements which may be observed everywhere: color, shape, pattern, texture, and movement. These elements are observed in everyday objects and occurrences: a farmer with a truck full of fresh strawberries for the market, bins of fresh fruits and vegetables, repeating shapes of buildings, textures of animals and plants, and the movement of cars, birds, and people. No works of art are shown in The Art of Seeing. The charm of the film lies in the fact that the above-named elements, normally thought to belong to the realm of art, are everywhere to be enjoyed by the perceptive individual.

FI 1971 10 minutes color

#### Utilization

The film is suitable as an introduction to the Art of Seeing series, or it may be shown on its own as a stimulus to aesthetic awareness. It provides a better approach than Discovering Ideas for Art, from the Discovering Art series.

#### Questions

1. What are the five basic elements to look for, as outlined in this film? Can you think of others?
2. What is visual awareness? aesthetic awareness? Are they the same?

Related Films

The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They?

Junkyard

Color

"Try to imagine a world where everything is grey." This introductory remark contrasts brilliantly colored images of flowers and crowds with black and white versions of the same. It is seen that one spot of color in an otherwise monochromatic subject holds the attention. Color demonstrates that man interprets much of what he sees in terms of color: blue means sky or water, green means land or trees. Many aspects of color are touched upon, but the enjoyment and response of the individual are emphasized. The distinction is made between warm and cool colors as found in both art and nature. For example, natural forms are often seen to be grayed and subdued in contrast to the colors of man-made objects. Color introduces the ideas that colors affect one another and influence perception; that optical illusions may be created with color, and that color may be used to create different shapes within a composition; and that some colors have come to possess their own symbolic value in particular situations. Finally, examples of paintings by a number of artists show how color may be used in various ways to express emotion.

FI

1968

10 minutes

color

Utilization

Because of its broad treatment of the subject, Color may be used as a teaser to initiate study of the properties of color, or it may simply be shown as a means of expanding aesthetic awareness. Since it does not go into the practical problems of color mixing, the film Discovering Color might be a useful accompaniment. Color could be shown to initiate

In-depth study of perception and the psychological aspects of color.  
The Art of Color by Johannes Itten is a valuable aid in such a study.

Questions

1. What feelings and things do you associate with the colors red, blue, yellow, brown, and grey?
2. How has society utilized color to represent values and to convey ideas or express authority (commands)?
3. Are there personal as well as objective associations with individual colors? Give examples of varying color symbolism from culture to culture.
4. Is color form? What is the significance of color in producing form in a painting? Which comes first, shape or color?
5. Can you think of particular examples of sculpture which utilize color and light to give form and a feeling of three-dimensionality?

Related Films

Abstraction

Chromophobia

Discovering Color

An Introduction to Visual Illusions

Who Is: Victor Vasarely

Cosmic Zoom

Cosmic Zoom is one of two films produced in 1968 on the subject of powers of ten. Both are based on Kees Boeke's book entitled Cosmic View, and both make use of animation and photography. Cosmic Zoom was produced by the National Film Board of Canada and Powers of Ten, the second film, was produced by Charles and Ray Eames for the Commission on College Physics. Cosmic Zoom opens with a boy in a boat in the middle of a lake, and moves out through continents and galaxies to the farthest conceivable point of the universe. Returning, it focuses on the boy and then on the tiniest particle of existence, the atom of a living cell. There is no narration or scientific explanation of any kind. Although some critics contend that it lacks the impact of Power of Ten, its lack of scientific data may make it more popular in an arts or humanities class. The visual images are sufficiently self-explanatory, and the film succeeds in stimulating the imagination. General audiences find the animation particularly appealing, whereas more sophisticated viewers may prefer the techniques used in Powers of Ten.

NFBC

1968

8 minutes

color

## Utilization

Cosmic Zoom may be used in conjunction with a film like Time Is to heighten awareness of the universe, or with a lyrical film like McLaren's Spheres to show how an artist interprets the phenomena around him. For film appreciation courses, it invites comparison with Powers of Ten. Reflections in Space is another film which shows how artists take their

subject matter from the ideas and happenings of their own particular eras. Finally, it may provide ideas for studio projects.

#### Questions

1. What animation techniques have been employed in this film?
2. Does the film succeed in conveying the vastness of the universe and the infinitesimal atom? If so, how does it achieve this sense? What shots and technical devices has the filmmaker used?
3. Create your impression of powers of ten, using any medium you choose.

#### Related Films

See above, Utilization

### Cry of the Marsh

This art-science film essay was created primarily to generate ecological concern. Death comes to a beautiful marsh. The film opens with shots of a teeming wetland full of flowers and singing birds. But soon the roar of heavy machinery is heard, and the marsh is demolished, the wildlife fleeing before the machines. A nest of baby birds, unable to escape, is burned to cinders in a brush fire set to clear the land for excavation. One of the tiny birds, in its attempt to escape death, symbolizes the life struggle at every level. Although Cry of the Marsh is primarily an ecological film, it is compelling in a broader sense. The issues of progress and technology and reverence for life are brought before the viewer, as is the beauty of nature. The photography is exceptional, the musical score moving.

SNYDBF

1970

12 minutes

color

#### Utilization

When shown to a group of teenagers the film inspires not only discussion but a variety of creative efforts: poems, short stories, interpretive dance, musical compositions, and paintings.

#### Questions

1. What is the central issue brought out in Cry of the Marsh?
2. Is the film successful in portraying the conflict between nature and technology? Why or why not?
3. In what other ways could this conflict be expressed or depicted?

#### Related Films

The Flood of Zen

The Family/Institution of Man

### Discovering Color

This is a limited film which does, however, provide an introduction to the mechanics of color mixing as it applies to painting. This is an exercise which often presents difficulties for beginning students, particularly those with an undeveloped or limited color sense. It is seen that colors differ in hue, value, and intensity. These three terms are defined; the examples chosen to illustrate the terms leave something to be desired but this can be supplemented by the teacher. The most valuable thing about the film is the actual demonstrations of color mixing. Color, from The Art of Seeing series, touches on other important aspects such as the psychology of color perception and how color is used to create optical illusions or express the artist's emotions.

BFA

1960

12 minutes

color

### Utilization

Discovering Color demonstrates the techniques of mixing color and stresses the fact that students can easily create any color they wish. The film could be shown more than once, perhaps with a classroom color mixing session in between.

### Questions

1. What are the three ways in which colors differ?
2. What are the basic hues? the primary hues? the secondary hues?
3. How do you change the value of a hue? its intensity?
4. Which hues do we call warm hues? which are cool?
5. What is a complementary hue?



Related Films

Color

Discovering Dark and Light

### Discovering Composition in Art

The world is seen to be neatly arranged (peas in a pod, leaves on a stem) or jumbled (signs along a highway, uncollected trash). Sometimes it is arranged by nature, and sometimes by man. (Although unstated, the visuals suggest that man is most often involved in the jumbling aspects.) In art, an orderly arrangement is called composition. Several guidelines to composition are presented: selecting desired elements and omitting unwanted ones; creating a center of interest distinguished by its color, tone, detail, or size; creating balance, formal or informal; creating movement and rhythm; and arranging the positive and negative space around objects. There is no attempt to dictate which types of composition "work" or do not "work." The film simply proffers practical suggestions, with appropriate illustrations, which may be tried out by the student who becomes conscious of the problems involved in organizing the elements of a painting.

BFA                      1964                      16 minutes                      color

#### Utilization

Since teenagers are often more conscious of what they do not know about painting than of what they do know intuitively, having passed the unselfconscious stage where such things as perspective and draftsmanship do not matter, such a film provides them with a practical guide and definite problems which they can attempt to work out. This is especially true of painting excursions out of doors, or classroom exercises. The explanation of positive and negative space is particularly helpful, since it is a concept which is not always easily grasped. Further

study of composition may be conducted through photographs. Since most people own cameras, have each student select a favorite photograph and talk about it. Or analyze the composition of paintings representing various periods and genres. Film footage may be analyzed frame by frame to see whether each stands by itself as a satisfying composition, or whether the film is dependent on the overall combination of image, sound, color, and storyline.

#### Questions

1. What is composition?
2. What is the difference between a formal composition and an informal composition?
3. How does the artist use positive and negative space?

#### Related Films

Gallery

Junkyard

Shape

### Discovering Creative Pattern

The purpose of Discovering Creative Pattern is to show that pattern has formal elements and structure, and that these elements may be seen in the natural world and manmade objects. The film moves from the museum to everyday objects to show examples of the effective use of pattern. It is seen that both nature and man make use of pattern. A single shape, called a motif, may be varied in size or combined with other motifs to create patterns. Pattern scaffolding, consisting of squares, rectangles, diamonds, or variations of these patterns, is used to form a framework. Well-designed pattern should never be more important than the object it enriches, but should harmonize with it. The five basic elements of pattern are lines, darks and lights, colors, textures, and shapes. These elements should be organized so as to lead the eye from shape to shape. The film concludes with examples of pattern found in animals such as zebras and giraffes, and pattern as it has been used by artists and craftsmen throughout history. Museum pieces show how the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans made use of pattern, and how it plays a large part in Medieval manuscripts, Renaissance sculpture, and Mexican art.

BFA

1965

17 minutes

color

#### Utilization

The film encourages the student to notice the many kinds of patterns, natural and manmade, which surround him. It could precede studio activity such as printmaking or batik where patterns are based on a motif chosen by the student. The film may also be used to introduce

pattern in an art history or art appreciation course taught by genres.

#### Questions

1. Is pattern merely decorative, or does it have any other function? Can it be functional?  $\zeta$
2. Is op art pattern? If so, is it merely decorative? If not, what distinguishes it from pattern?
3. How many patterns can be abstracted from the objects you see around you?

#### Related Films

#### Discovering Line

Permutations (included in Experiments in Motion Graphics)

Discovering Dark and Light

This is not one of the better films in the Discovering Art series, since it is too long for the information conveyed and the script is mediocre, but it provides an introduction to the concept of value, a concept which is not easy to grasp. "Value" is defined as "variations of light and dark." It is seen to occur in two major ways in nature: first, as being within the object itself, as its color or colors; and second, as light falling on the object. This distinction is not conveyed too clearly initially, but by the end of the presentation, through repetition, most students will understand the difference between value and hue. Paint is used to show what happens when black is added in varying quantities to white. These values are likened to notes on a musical scale. In a demonstration of color values, colors are seen to possess their own values which may be combined to create contrasts or harmonious relationships. Examples show how darks and lights may be achieved in pencil drawings, clay modeling and sculpture. A quick survey of paintings and sculpture dating from prehistoric cave paintings to the mobiles of Calder show effective uses of dark and light. The film Light from the Art of Seeing series is a more satisfactory overall treatment of the subject, but fails to consider the practical aspects of color mixing. Discovering Dark and Light is a useful demonstration film for this reason: it provides a clear demonstration of how color values may be obtained.

BFA

1965

17 minutes

color

Utilization

After viewing the film, students should engage in exercises such as

those demonstrated. In this way, they will learn to achieve desired tonal contrasts with paint, pencil, or any other medium. Experiments may be conducted with movable light sources; degree of brightness may be varied. Students could make studies of a given object at different times during the day, to show the effect of changing light. Studies may be carried out indoors and outdoors and a comparison made of the results. Looking at a painting in color and attempting to render its tonal values monochromatically is a helpful exercise.

#### Questions

1. What is the difference between hue and value?
2. How may color values be compared to notes on a musical scale?
3. What role does white play in color mixing? Black?
4. Examine some collages, or paintings that incorporate real objects in their surface. Which variations in dark and light are part of the object itself, and which are due to the way the light strikes the object?

#### Related Films

Light

### Discovering Form in Art

Exciting and ambitious in scope, this film talks about art as "form building." Form is defined as the organizing of planes and surfaces and the result of force or energy. For example, cloud formations are the result of the action of sun, wind, or rain. Man supplies his energies to create beautiful forms. The five basic three-dimensional solid forms are presented with examples and variations. The film provides suggestions for the making of mobiles, emphasizing the fact that two-dimensional materials such as paper and cardboard can be bent and cut to become three-dimensional. The illusion of three dimensions in drawing and painting is achieved through use of perspective, color, placement on the picture plane, etc. The film does a good job of relating the worlds of nature and art. Well-chosen examples depict forms in both natural phenomena and works of art. It is observed that forms are created by man for both practical and impractical uses, and that forms tell us about the arts and cultures of other times.

BFA

1967

24 minutes

color

#### Utilization

Discovering Form in Art may be shown to develop awareness of form: to show its properties, and some of the ways it may be created. The film also provides ideas for studio activity.

#### Questions

1. Define form.
2. How may two-dimensional materials be used to create three-dimensional forms?



3. How are three-dimensional objects (landscapes, still life) / rendered on the picture plane in traditional modes of painting?

How was form treated by a) Byzantine artists b) the cubists?

Related Films

Clay (Origin of the Species)

Discovering Perspective

People Who Make Things

The Rebels/Ecology of Design

Shape

### Discovering Ideas for Art

The only justification for including this film is that it may stimulate the student who is lacking in confidence or ideas, and that it provides an overview of the main emphasis of the series. Otherwise it is a limited film which has very little to do with either ideas or discovering, and too much to do with "art." For the beginning student, probably at the junior high level, the film makes two general but valid suggestions: first, that the aspiring artist should learn to see differences in things around him, and second, that he should learn to make inventive use of what he sees. However, the emphasis is solely on "creating art from the world around us," and the examples given are very limited. No mention is made of the worlds of the media, social issues, people, or the inner world of ideas, intellect, and imagination. In addition, the emphasis on technique is somewhat heavy. Fortunately, this emphasis is toned down considerably in later films in the series: otherwise it would be very easy for the viewer to gain the impression that the various elements such as color, pattern, texture, and line are the work of art, not just the means of expressing the artist's ideas and emotions.

BFA

1966

16 minutes

color

Related Films

The Art of Seeing

Art, People, Feelings

Same Subject - Different Treatment

### Discovering Line

Line is presented as a visual adventure in space, a record of action. Its major sources are natural and manmade. Well-chosen examples showing glaciers, water in motion, sand blowing in the desert, the process of growth as seen in the onion's rings, the ridges of sea shells and bark are contrasted with lines created by man and manmade objects such as tractor tracks, furrows in a plowed field, freeways, building construction, and scaffolding. The properties of line are seen to be horizontal, vertical, curving, diagonal. Ways of varying lines are by changing length, width, degree of curvature, direction or position, and texture. Combinations of lines may create repetition, opposition, or transition. Lines are seen to create space, volume, and distance, and to express individuality through qualities such as delicacy and forcefulness.

BFA

1963

17 minutes

color

#### Utilization

The film is designed to introduce the properties of line, and this medium is a particularly suitable means of conveying those properties, since the essence of line is motion. Discovering Line suggests possibilities for using line and stimulates the viewer to look about him at the variety of lines to be found in both natural and manmade forms. Drawings and paintings may be compared to discover different uses of line. Sculpture may be studied to find out what constitutes line in three-dimensional objects.

### Questions

1. Discuss some of the variations in line you can observe around you.
2. How can line be varied in drawing? painting? sculpture? painting on film?
3. How can a line reflect emotion? How would you express anger, joy, or peace, using line?

### Related Films

Art and Motion

Discovering Perspective

The Dot and the Line

Movement

### Discovering Perspective

Discovering Perspective provides a clear and basic treatment of a subject which often presents both teachers and students with difficulties. The examples are simple and concrete, bringing the subject down to earth, whereas it is so often shrouded in mystery and imagined difficulties. No mention is made of one- and two-point perspective; no mention is made of Ghilberti or Brunelleschi; no diagrams are presented; and no mathematical formulae. Instead, it is seen that our world is one of depth and distance. Creating the illusion of this distance on a flat surface is called perspective. There follow six basic methods of creating depth in a work of art, each of which boils down to pure common sense and each of which is appropriately illustrated: overlapping of images; placement of images on the picture plane (close objects placed lower than faraway objects); varying tone and color so that the closest objects are bright and faraway objects are grayed; cutting out detail in further objects; using soft, blurry lines in the distance; varying the size of objects so that they become smaller as they recede; and making objects form lines that move closer and closer together (converging lines). One of the most useful aspects of the film is that it shows the above methods as they are translated into painting, collage, and printmaking.

BFA

1962

14 minutes

color

#### Utilization

In the case of perspective study, film provides the teacher with an excellent vehicle for putting across concepts which are not readily

understood. Before showing the film, the class could consider a number of paintings or photographs to determine how distance has been treated. The class could suggest ways in which they make objects appear closer or farther away in their own drawings and paintings.

Questions

1. How is it possible to make some things seem farther away than others on a flat surface?
2. What is the difference between two dimensions and three dimensions?
3. Describe how an old-fashioned stereopticon operated.
4. How did the 3-D (stereoscopic) movie develop? What are the basic principles behind this innovation in photography and projection?

Related Films

The Art of Maurits Escher

An Introduction to Visual Illusions

Space



### Discovering Texture

This comprehensive film uses a variety of examples and demonstrations to make the following point: that texture is basically a result of the way different surfaces reflect the light. A surface which reflects light unevenly has a rough texture, one which reflects even amounts of soft light has a matte texture, and a shiny object which reflects more light is said to have a smooth texture. Examples are given of natural textures such as wood and stone, which may or may not be changed by man. When he does change them, he selects and combines them to create harmonious, aesthetically pleasing arrangements such as furniture, architecture, and gardens. Discovering Texture gives examples of manmade textures created with clay, paint, ink, crayon, yarns, and fabrics. The possibilities of combining materials such as crayon over paint and vice-versa, or plaster and metal, glass and brick, etc., are presented. Negative photographic film is used to show up textures which might otherwise go unnoticed. Examples of student paintings, collages, and constructions, as well as works by artists as different from one another as Constable and Picasso, are shown.

BFA

1961

18 minutes

color

#### Utilization

Discovering Texture will help to create an awareness of man's role in selecting and combining textures to create functional objects and environments, as well as works of art. It is also a good exercise in collage, or in selecting materials of various textures, colors, and other qualities to create a composition.

### Questions

1. What do you think Duchamp intended to do when he created the fur teacup? Discuss the soft sculpture of Claes Oldenburg.
2. Why do some people dislike plastic?
3. What sorts of things are pleasing to touch? Why?  
What things do you find unpleasant to touch? Why?
4. What are some of the ways to change the texture of clay?
5. How can textures be created with paint? With crayons?

### Related Films

Fiber in Art

Junkyard

Kevin

Textures

100% PURE EXCEL 101 STAPLE





The Dot and the Line: A Romance in Lower Mathematics

This cartoon is based on the book by Norman Juster and features a conservative straight line who is in love with a frivolous and bouncy dot. Unfortunately, the dot finds him hopelessly dull and prefers the company of an undisciplined squiggle. The straight line is almost ready to despair of ever winning the dot when he discovers that with a great deal of concentration he can turn himself into a variety of exciting shapes ranging from triangles and rhomboids to the most complex curves, circles, and polyhedrons. The dot is captivated; the squiggle is shown up and his devil-may-care abandon is seen to be mere chaos and lack of discipline. The dot and the line live, if not happily ever after, at least reasonably so. The film concludes with the moral: "To the vector belong the spoils."

FI                      circa 1965                      9 minutes                      color

Utilization

The Dot and the Line has entertainment value and at the same time allows the students to study the properties of lines, such as direction and movement. It also invites consideration of the psychological associations contained in various lines, shapes, and colors. It is a witty film and may be useful for a discussion of how a book, which is traditionally concerned with the written word, can say so much with visual images, which in turn can be successfully transferred into the film medium.

Questions

1. What kinds of shapes constitute the background for the dot? For the line? For the squiggle?

2. What is the effect on the squiggle of his background shapes?  
Would he appear as undisciplined if his background were plain?
3. Explain the color symbolism attached to each of the three characters.
4. Compare Norman Juster's book with the film. Which in your opinion is the more successful?
5. Draw lines which for you capture the essence of the following qualities: joy, versatility, bad temper, sleepiness, inscrutability, flirtatiousness.

#### Related Films

Art and Motion

Discovering Line

Figures

The purpose of this film is to stimulate awareness of the visual environment, and particularly the human figure. The opening sequence presents a camera interpretation of a live subject. Light effects and camera techniques produce visual surprises and distortions in the human body which lead the viewer into a study of the figure as it has been portrayed through the ages. The simplicity of figures in cave paintings and children's art is compared with the sophistication of the Renaissance and the distortions of the twentieth century. The patterns produced by the play of colored light over a dancer's body are compared with the distortions of artists such as Giacometti and Picasso. It is seen that such distortions may be employed to express emotion and, more broadly, the artist's stance or philosophy.

FI                      1968                      14 minutes                      color

## Utilization

Figures could be shown to initiate discussion on the role of distortion in art, particularly as a twentieth century phenomenon. Or the treatment by artists of the human body might be considered from an historical point of view. Making analytical drawings of paintings such as Picasso's "Weeping Woman" or Duchamp's "Nude Descending a Staircase" may help the student to understand the artist's motives in creating them, and emphasize the underlying structure of these works. For example, close scrutiny of the "Weeping Woman" reveals an amazing faithfulness to detail, from a tear following a furrow in a cheek to the corner of a handkerchief caught between the teeth.

### Questions

1. What is the significance of the distortion in Picasso's "Guernica"?  
What do Giacometti's elongated human figures suggest?
2. To what extent are these deformed images rooted in actual human anatomy? Do they reflect serious study of form, or are they mere whims or caprices of the artist?
3. What effect do these distortions have on the viewer?
4. How has the depiction of man through the ages reflected various philosophical climates?

### Related Films

Abstraction

Meaning in Modern Painting

Same Subject--Different Treatment

## Junkyard

Junkyard is a non-narrative visual experience intended to stimulate aesthetic awareness. A junkdump is seen under the changing influence of the seasons. The slick, clean lines of arrogant new automobiles, with their flashing lights and smoothly reflecting surfaces are contrasted with the battered, rusty carcasses to be seen in any automobile graveyard. Peeling paint and corroded metal are normally considered ugly, and yet these discarded shells are seen to have a presence of their own, a different sort of nostalgic and even fragile beauty, with their mottled surfaces acted on by the forces of nature and overgrown by wild flowers, with the sunshine and rain reflected through shattered glass. The colors, textures, and combinations of almost-unrecognizable shapes become paintings and sculpture in their own right, or at least they provide the raw materials which may be put together by the perceptive and creative individual. This is Junkyard's message.

BFA                      1969                      10 minutes                      color

### Utilization

Junkyard could be shown prior to an excursion to a dump, as a means of opening students' eyes to the artistic possibilities of such an excursion. It might also precede a study of collage or "found art."

### Questions

1. Discuss the idea that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder."
2. Light, color, shape, movement, and texture are important elements in a work of art. Did you recognize some or all of these elements in the Junkyard?

48  
3. How has the filmmaker created a work of art from these elements?

Related Films

The Art of Seeing

Discovering Texture

The Magic of Machines

Shape

The Towers

Kevin

Kevin provides students with the opportunity to see what effect sight, or the lack of it, has on the individual. The film consists of the comments of a highly sensitive ten-year-old blind boy. Through its sheer visual impact (shot as it were directly through the eye of an individual, with emphasis on the tiny details which the eye absorbs almost unconsciously), the film creates a contrast with the sightless world of Kevin. However, the viewer gradually becomes aware of the sharpness of Kevin's other senses. He is conscious of the textures of things. He speaks of a big old oak tree as having "a bad body." He imagines the color of the sky. He can tell what color the grass is by the way it feels in his hand. But he is very conscious of all that he is missing. He is unable to imagine how big something is. He is limited to the confines of his backyard. What would be the use of having a bicycle if he couldn't ride around and look at things? The film is particularly effective as a means of increasing awareness of the role of the senses.

CF

1969

17 minutes

b2

Utilization

Kevin could be shown prior to a sensitivity training session where students are blindfolded. Exercises could include drawings made by touch rather than sight, and a "blind walk" where sensations are noted. In a study of sensory perception, the following experiment is suggested:

Materials: lemon extracts, burner burner, cupcakes or cookies flavored with lemon, and a film such as Robert's Orange Soda Cars.

Procedure: Have students enter the darkened room where extract is heating. Have them eat the cakes while the film is shown, by-passing titles and credits. After the film has been run, ask students what they observed. Discussion brings out the difference between what is observed and what is simply inferred from the experience.

This discussion could be followed by the showing of a film such as Eye of the Beholder or Fidelity of Report, in which audience observation accuracy is tested. This in turn could initiate study of the psychology of perception.

#### Related Films

The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They?

An Introduction to Visual Illusions

To See Or Not to See



Light

Well-chosen examples demonstrate that everything in the world is revealed to us through light; only when light falls on an object can we see its texture, color, and shape. When the element of color is removed, for instance in a black and white drawing or print, we can still perceive texture and shape. Thus the use of black and white is shown to be an effective means of expression. An excellent sequence shows the effect of light on various pieces of sculpture, and without being told that "light creates form" the student will see for himself what an important part light plays in sculpture, both as a means of interpreting three-dimensional form and as a means of creating interest in texture, reflections, and color. The film deals briefly with differences in amount and direction of light. Examples are given of back, front, and side lighting and degree of illumination and shadow may be observed. It is seen that color by itself is capable of creating a sense of light, and that the artist makes use of this fact to draw attention to the important parts of a painting. Both paintings and live footage show the various properties of light--soft or harsh, direct or indirect. The film closes with a time-lapse sequence of sunrise over the New York skyline. As the sun rises one may observe changes in the color of buildings as the light hits them and as the sun's position changes. Finally, as the sun goes down, the colors disappear completely.

FI

1968

10 minutes

color

### Utilization

Used as part of The Art of Seeing series, Light provides an introduction to the study of light as it is related to perception, color, form, and movement. It provides stimulus for the student to look about him at the manifestations of light without telling him what he should look for, or how. It should be a useful motivation tool for a studio class in painting or sculpture, since the examples are not just chosen to accompany or illustrate the script of the film, but are idea-provoking and aesthetically stimulating. For instance, it could introduce such disparate subjects as Rembrandt's chiaroscuro, the theories of the Impressionists, or light sculpture. One might also use it in conjunction with animated films in which light and color play an important function. Students should be encouraged to carry out their own experiments with light in the classroom and out of doors. There are many exercises which may be employed to further develop awareness of light, such as suddenly eliminating the light source in a room, and restoring it by degrees. One sees the differences between various light sources such as candlelight, strobe lights, and sunlight.

### Questions

1. How is lighting (or the sense of light) produced in a black and white drawing? a painting? sculpture? film?
2. Discuss the symbolic associations belonging to light and dark.

### Related Films

#### Allures

#### Discovering Light and Dark

#### An Introduction to Visual Illusions

#### Permutations

Movement

This film is a basic, non-didactic treatment of movement as it may be perceived in nature and as it is translated into some art forms. An opening sequence depicts birds in flight, leaves blowing in the wind, a fire burning. This is movement in nature, we are told, but it also occurs in art and architecture. Some of the major properties of movement, as observed in both art and nature, are presented. Movement has direction (up, down, towards or away from, or a combination of these) and speed. It may be repeated, it may be random or unpredictable, vigorous or graceful. Just as excessive speed causes a blurring of the moving object, the painter can blur outlines to suggest movement. The film provides a useful introduction to movement and its properties but is somewhat limited by the ten-minute format. For instance, it does not touch on kinetic sculpture or film, and the photographic techniques used to display various motions are not used to their maximum advantage. For some high school classes, the film Art and Motion might supply more ideas for studio work, since it relates the world of nature to the artistic experience and the psychology of perception.

F1                      1968                      10 minutes                      color

Utilization

Movement is useful as an introduction to the following projects: discovering different types of motion; translating these into two and three dimensional formats; studying mobiles; considering op-art and the elements which create the illusion of movement.

### Questions

1. What examples of movement do you recall from this film?
2. Considering the film itself, how did the director create movement?
3. What instances of movement can you cite from other films seen in class or in movie theaters, particularly movement created through camera positions and editing?
4. Is film a more movement-oriented medium than painting or sculpture? Explain.

### Related Films

#### Art and Motion

#### The Art of Maurits Escher

#### A Chairy Tale

#### Discovering Line in Art

#### The Dot and the Line

#### Experiments in Motion Graphics

#### Figures

#### An Introduction to Visual Illusions

### Powers of Ten

This film captures the awesome scale of the universe, a quality which for some viewers is lacking in Cosmic Zoom, a similar treatment of powers of ten which was produced by the National Film Board of Canada (see page 23). Powers of Ten, produced for the Commission on College Physics by the office of Charles Eames, noted architect and filmmaker, uses photographs and maps as well as narration and the animation camera to convey the relative size of things in the universe and what it means to add a zero to any number. A musical score composed and performed by Elmer Bernstein reinforces the visual images and narration. The film may, however, contain too much advanced scientific information to appeal to younger audiences. In such cases, Cosmic Zoom has been found to be more effective.

EAMES

1968

10 minutes

color

#### Utilization.

Powers of Ten will be useful in general art courses and humanities, in a study of architecture, and in film study programs. For the latter it could be shown with Cosmic Zoom for a comparison of techniques and overall effectiveness.

#### Questions

1. Which of the two films on the powers of ten do you consider to be the most effective presentation of the subject? Why?
2. Comment on the following: "Art renders the invisible visible."
3. Discuss the view held by many artists today, that art and technology are becoming so linked that the scientists will be the artists of the future.

4. What are your ideas on art of the future?

Related Films

Time Is

The Beginning of Life

Reflections in Space

57

Same Subject--Different Treatment

Using images common to the graphic arts, this film shows that many graphic interpretations of the same symbol are possible and/or desirable. The first image presented is the eye, the center of perception. A standard dictionary definition and anatomy text diagram are shown, and are followed by a montage of drawings, prints, photographs, paintings, and sculpture, ranging from African masks to contemporary fashion photography and live subjects. Techniques used include filmograph, collage-animation, split screen, and live action photography. Other images dealt with in the film include the head, the human figure, a chair, and the sun. Each is depicted first in the academic manner, with dictionary definition and diagram, then as seen by various artists and photographers down through the centuries. Other than a reading of the dictionary definition of each object, the sound-track consists only of music. Although the idea is a good one, the realization is slightly disappointing. In the section on the human body, a model adopts the poses seen on the other side of the screen in the form of engravings, sculpture, etc. The reason for this literal rendition is not entirely clear. The choice of visuals is not always good, and in places the film has something of the appearance of a home movie. However, this is a useful film to introduce the idea that perception differs from individual to individual and from culture to culture, especially where students have developed the idea that there is only one acceptable way to represent an object.

FI

1969

10 minutes

color

### Utilization

The film's main function is that of a teaser. ~~The~~ Images come and go too quickly for any prolonged study, but the general effect is stimulating, and might encourage less adventurous students to experiment. It also shows the variety of possibilities open to the individual.

### Questions

1. In what way does the dictionary definition (that is, the scientific explanation of some thing or person) differ from the artistic statement?
2. Are the purposes of scientific, dictionary definitions and artistic interpretations different? If so, explain the end or final purpose of each.
3. Compare the above-mentioned treatments and the billboard and the television commercial. Is advertising a new art?
4. What techniques used by the filmmaker in this film are parallel or similar to techniques used by the graphic artist?

### Related Films

Cosmic Zoom and Powers of Ten

The Eyes Have It--Or Do They?

Gallery

This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium is the Message

Where Time is a River



## Shape

Looking at shape is one way of learning about the world and about oneself. A colorful montage of shapes, recognizable and otherwise, leads into a study of the different ways in which artists translate the shapes they see into painting or sculpture. Shape deals with the difference between two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Natural shapes tend to be organic and irregular, whereas manmade shapes tend to be geometric. Often artists change or simplify (abstract) shapes, or they create contrasts of shapes which emphasize each other. Shapes may be used to create feeling or mood: thin, fragile shapes may convey a sense of tension, whereas solid, heavy shapes convey a sense of stability. Well-chosen examples of the sculpture of Henry Moore and Alberto Giacometti convey this contrast. The jagged forms of Mexican painter Tamao are disturbing; irregular shapes indicate movement, and unexpected combinations of shapes result in the sense of mystery achieved by painters such as Miro and Chagall. And finally, it is seen that other elements such as texture and strong color can add excitement to shapes.

FI                      1968                      10 minutes                      color

### Utilization

Shape may be shown to stimulate awareness of the environment or to help to develop an appreciation of why artists produce the particular kinds of works they do. This film could precede an exercise in creating shapes that express particular moods or attitudes; students might then react to one another's shapes by creating others which "agree" or

"fight" or "ignore" them. This exercise may be carried out on large strips of paper, scroll-fashion, or on large perpendicular flats.

#### Questions

1. Cite examples of media that are primarily two or three dimensional in nature. What does dimensionality have to do with shape?
2. If natural shapes are primarily organic and irregular and manmade shapes are geometric, can there be manmade natural shapes? What is "found" art?
3. How does lighting influence or produce shape?

#### Related Films

Abstraction

Art, People, Feelings

Discovering Composition

The Dot and the Line

## Space

Space is an animated, rather amateur and dated production which is nevertheless still acceptable and useful, and may be enjoyed by teenagers. "Stubby," an animated pencil, depicts various ways of showing space and distance. The five methods shown are: size differences; vanishing points (one and two point perspective); value and color; overlapping; and exaggeration. The film emphasizes that artists are not tied to rules of perspective, and suggests experimentation to achieve desired effects. Discovering Perspective provides a much more comprehensive treatment of perspective as it is used by the artist and art student, with appropriate examples and illustrations, but does not mention single or two-point perspective or vanishing points by name.

BFA

1956

10 minutes

color

### Utilization

Space may be used where a basic point-by-point rundown of the basic elements of perspective is needed. The animation is dated but the film provides a fairly clear demonstration of single and two-point perspective.

### Questions

1. What are the five ways of showing space and distance, as suggested in the film?
2. What is single point perspective?
3. What is two-point perspective?

Related Films

Discovering Form in Art

Discovering Perspective

An Introduction to Visual Illusions

Time Is

This highly dramatic film which was produced for the Nuffield Foundation Unit for the History of Ideas (London, England) as part of a program of books and films on the ancestry of science, explores time as it relates to human experience. Filmic techniques are matched beautifully to the concepts they interpret; time-lapse photography shows plant growth, speeded-up sequences illustrate racing car crashes, cloud patterns, and high dives. The possibility of the existence of other time schemes--two-dimensional time, for example--is suggested, and the subsequent breaking up of an existing order is graphically illustrated, as is the possibility of the existence of another universe consisting of "anti-matter" where all time and motion goes backwards. Through clever use of film techniques, the viewer feels the tranquility of time standing still; he also experiences the irrational terror one feels when time loses its meaning or gets out of control, the sensation of awakening suddenly without a sense of time or place. Time Is treats the existence of "biological clocks," such as those which govern animal behavior, and shows that man's biological clock is influenced by such factors as darkness, centrifugal speed, heat, and age. Man's attempts to objectify time by the creation of precision clocks is seen as an attempt to grasp and control the forces of his destiny. "When man creates an abstract idea, he creates a monster." Accompanying this statement is a surreal sequence of a newly-hatched chick regressing back into its shell, which closes up once more to become a smooth, unbroken surface. While Time Is explores the scientific

aspects of time, it is not necessary for an appreciation of the general ideas of the film to understand the theory of relativity or cosmology. As the narrator states, man has never succeeded in understanding the concept of time, a concept which he himself has created. It is enough, perhaps, that the viewer is excited and provoked by the visual images and the general ideas presented. Time Is heightens awareness of the physical world, alters perception, and provokes questions about reality and existence. In essence, the film does what the artist himself attempts to do. . . manipulate and interpret reality.

MGHT · 1964 · 30 minutes · color

#### Utilization

Time Is is useful for a discussion of surrealism and Dada because of its emphasis on the irrational and absurd. It could also be used to introduce a survey of science fiction literature and films such as 2001: A Space Odyssey. The relation of time and motion as observed in Time Is could be applied to a study of kinetic art. Shown in film appreciation classes, it provides an introduction to a number of techniques.

#### Questions

1. How has the concept of time been treated by a) medieval artists  
b) the surrealists c) kinetic sculptors d) film makers e) conceptual art?
2. In what sense is the artist "out of his time"? In what sense does he act as a prophet?
3. What properties of the film medium make it particularly suitable for an exploration of the nature of time?

Related Films

The Beginning of Life

Cosmic Zoom

Gallery

The Mood of Zen

Powers of Ten

Reflections in Space

Understanding Movies

## CHAPTER II

### PERCEPTION: FORMING ATTITUDES

A number of facets or stages make up the creative process, as the film Why Man Creates so amusingly demonstrates. The first stage, as indicated in the preceding chapter, involves looking at and experiencing the world around us. The second stage, that of taking a stance in regard to what is experienced, is more cerebral but is, nevertheless, creative. The films in this chapter have been selected to encourage the student to reflect, to become aware of a spectrum of attitudes and a variety of critical norms, to relate what he sees to his experience of life. These films set forth a multitude of attitudes: the uninitiated man-on-the-street's indignant comments about an abstract animated film, the views of respected critics and historians, Marshall McLuhan's witty observations on communication and the electronic age, statements of artists past and present, and the relation of visual perception to attitude formation. In these films we see that the artist's work reflects his mental set or perceptions. And certainly the public's reactions to his work give us an insight into their attitudes. So art becomes an exchange of sorts between the artist and the perceiver, where both give and both receive. John Dewey describes this "active passiveness" demanded of the perceiver thus: "For to perceive, a



beholder must create his own experience. And his creation must include relations comparable to those which the original producer underwent. They are not the same in any literal sense. But with the perceiver, as with the artist, there must be an ordering of the elements of the whole that is in form, although not in detail, the same as the process of organization the creator of the work consciously experienced. Without an act of recreation the object is not perceived as a work of art."<sup>10</sup> Rudolf Arnheim, in speaking of aesthetic education, expresses it thus: "What he [the child] needs is perceptual challenge, something that mobilizes the mind through the senses. You have to teach the child how to respond to images that are of some use to him and how to create such images himself."<sup>11</sup>

Exposure to the different ways of seeing and feeling expressed in these films will stimulate the student to reflect on the nature of art and his relationship to it, and enable him to recognize and appreciate some of the universal themes expressed by artists throughout the ages. In short, the informed perceiver becomes a critic.

Initially, the intention was to provide a comprehensive listing of materials in the area of art history, since it was thought that films documenting significant art movements through the centuries would also demonstrate differing modes of perception in an historical

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<sup>10</sup> Dewey, p. 54.

<sup>11</sup> James R. Petersen, "Eyes Have They, But They See Not: A Conversation with Rudolf Arnheim," Psychology Today, June, 1972, p. 96.

perspective. However, after extensive screening of 16mm films on art history topics, it appears that sufficient scope does not exist on the present film market to make a selection of consistent quality possible. To use the materials which are available would only result in a hodge-podge approach to the history of art. Interestingly, the films displaying the best quality seem mainly to deal with twentieth-century artists, which may suggest that the film medium is more relevant in conveying the accomplishments and concepts of contemporary artists, while a more static medium (slide transparencies or filmstrips) lends itself more effectively to pre-twentieth-century art. These more static media allow the instructor to keep a given image on the screen for any length of time. They allow for greater study of detail, and in many cases there is a better possibility of maintaining color quality. They also allow for greater flexibility of juxtaposition.

The emphasis on a humanistic approach to art history in today's high schools was predicted by filmmaker and critic Béla Balász in the '30s. "What is required is not merely a history of art but a history of art running to and linked with a history of mankind."<sup>12</sup> A newly released program of sound-slide sets in the humanities for use in English, social studies, and art produced by the Center for the Humanities reflects this interdisciplinary approach. The history of art is presented thematically rather than chronologically, and is skillfully related to the significant historical events and ideas which

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<sup>12</sup>Béla Balász, Theory of the Film: Character and Growth of a New Art, trans. by Edith Bone (London: Dennis Dobson, Ltd., 1952), p. 33.

influenced it. Some of the programs are entitled Man Creates: In His Own Image, Man Creates: For God or Country, and Man Creates: For Love or Money. This series, entitled Man--The Measure of All Things, also includes the Metropolitan Seminars in Art, five sound-slide sets adapted from the text written by John Canaday, under the direction of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. These programs will have wide application in many high schools and may ultimately be a sounder investment than film rental where art history materials are required.

In spite of this writer's belief that the use of film to teach art history should be supplementary, there are nevertheless some film treatments of general art history material which may be highly effective. Sir Kenneth Clark's popular Civilisation: A Personal View is a useful means of introducing some students to the history of Western culture and ideas. It is questionable just how much concrete knowledge can be gained from such a broad treatment, but as an overall exposure it is recommended. The series of thirteen films is available for purchase or rental. A condensed filmstrip version is also available.

Another series entitled Museums Without Walls is currently being produced by Universal Education and Visual Arts, and consists of eleven films, each running an hour in length. The programs deal with individual artists such as Goya and Picasso, and with movements such as German Expressionism and Dada.

Films on individual artists or particular periods may provide background not easily gained elsewhere, and when used as highlights can afford both the teacher and the class with a change of pace. Where

individual films on art history subjects have been included in this chapter, it is because they have been judged to be exceptional in treatment, and directly related to the process of perceiving and formation of attitudes, rather than merely presenting information.

### Art, People, Feelings

The main theme of this comprehensive film is that art, people, and feelings are inseparable. It deals with the ways people communicate feelings, how these feelings can act as inspirations for artistic endeavors, and how feelings are recorded and transmitted in the arts. In life, people's emotions can often be seen most clearly in their facial expressions. The artist expresses his feelings by translating his inner experiences into visual form. There are as many varieties of expression as there are responses. Glimpses are provided of many different visual expressions, ranging from Charlie Chaplin's famous gestures to shots from the feature film Woodstock, and from medieval paintings to Superman cartoons and antiwar posters. Individuality is the primary characteristic of today's artist. How does he transmit his feelings? The film suggests four methods. First, the medium, whether it be camera, paint, clay, or light, will influence the artist in what he does; second, he uses line, texture, shape, color, light and dark to express emotion; third, he makes use of distortion or abstraction (a sequence of negative photographic images illustrates this well, and examples of art works ranging from primitive masks to Picasso's paintings show how effective distortion and abstraction can be in evoking emotional response); fourth, in recording actual human action (the documentary film is an example), the artist can communicate his attitudes; and fifth, man often turns to nature as a source of inspiration and in order to find his place in the universe. An effective sequence using photographs and posters alternated with paintings and

graphics, shows how artists down through the ages have portrayed the horrors of revolution, war, and death. This also points up another role of the artist--that of social commentator.

This is a useful and well-made film. The choice of visuals, with the exception of the now-hackneyed opening and closing shots of young lovers on a beach, is good. It provides an unusually comprehensive portrayal of emotion through the ages in all media. It relates art to human experience, and touches on issues relevant to the young person. It will be seen that art has always depicted life, its celebrations and tragedies, people and their emotions. It relates the sources of art and the means of translating an idea into a tangible form, as well as showing the steps involved in the creative process. It succeeds in conveying the idea that relevant art is not limited to the present; many works produced in the past have great value and significance today.

PFP

1972

15 minutes

color

#### Utilization

Art, People, Feelings is a good film to develop aesthetic sensitivity or to initiate discussion of the functions of art. As a motivational tool in a studio class it will present many ideas which will excite students. In a study of art history, especially one which is thematically based, it provides good material on the art of social comment and protest. Following a showing of the film, students might collect pictorial representations of human facial expressions, actions, and emotions. These could be used simply for observation, or to create collages or drawings. Some of the material could be re-photographed

and put together in film form. A practical exercise in depicting feelings can be carried out as follows: have students make a "statement" which expresses a distinct feeling such as envy, anger, embarrassment, or joy. The statement should take the form of a single image, preferably abstract, in which the form and the color convey the desired emotion. These statements should be made rapidly, if possible, and on a large surface such as a wall or on long strips of paper placed on the floor. Once the initial images are made, each student should have the opportunity to "react" in paint to another student's statement. This will involve the creation of another image next to the first, resulting in a kind of conversation between the two shapes.

#### Questions

1. Is it the goal of all artists to express feeling? What about painters like Mondrian? Lichtenstein? Vasarely?
2. Do you think the film is successful in depicting human emotions? What about the opening and closing sequences?
3. How does Picasso use distortion to evoke an emotional response?
4. Why does man turn to nature? Has nature a civilizing effect on man, as Sir Kenneth Clark suggests in his Civilisation series or in his book Landscape into Art?
5. How would you go about translating the feelings of loneliness, community, hatred, or love in various media? Realistically? Abstractly?

#### Related Films

The Art of Seeing series

Art: What Is It? Why Is It?

Meaning In Modern Painting

Art: What Is It? Why Is It?

This film, written and narrated by John Canaday for the Encyclopaedia Britannica Humanities series, explores some of the basic questions people have about the arts, such as "Why, with all of nature around us, do we want to make imitations of it?" and "What does art tell us about life that we might not know otherwise?" Using examples of masterpieces from all cultures and eras, Canaday shows that art is essentially an exploration of man's nature. He traces man's thought and self concepts from the earliest cave paintings through a comparison of man as seen by the Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Christians, and shows that with the advent of Christianity, an enmity between the flesh and the spirit became manifest. This dual nature of man has become the province of Western man's art, although art has not remained static. With the Renaissance the humanization of art triumphed, and with the 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries an interest in the landscape led into active discovery of the world. In Art: What Is It? Why Is It? both the visuals and the soundtrack are well above average. It is an ambitious undertaking, well carried out. The only possible criticism might be that it attempts too much in the way of verbal explanation of art theory. Students may benefit from a second screening.

EBEC

1963

30 minutes

color

Utilization

This is an excellent film to show to both junior and senior high school classes to convey a better understanding of the artistic process, to show why works of art differ from century to century and country to country, and to indicate some of the formative influences on art of



this century. As with all films in the Humanities series, and particularly those written by John Canaday, there are extensive teacher's guides available from the distributor.

#### Questions

1. Does art have a function in the state? Should a government encourage art, ignore it, mold it to its own ends, or discourage it?
2. In a democracy it is believed by many that what is good can be understood by the majority. Is a good painting, then, one which is considered good by the most people? What sort of criteria can be applied to evaluate works of art?
3. Explain the connection of art and magic in the mind of primitive man. How did the connection of art and religion differ from this? Why does there appear to be so little religious art today?
4. Using some current nonobjective paintings or sculpture, can you comment on the following: what sort of comment or reflection on our society may be observed in these works? What elements need to be present in a society to produce lasting art? Is modern art merely decorative?

#### Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

The Magic Machines

Meaning in Modern Painting: Parts I and II

People Who Make Things

Why Man Creates

### A Chairy Tale

In this "pixillation" animated film by Norman McLaren, a young man attempts to sit on a chair. His refusal to consider the chair as anything other than a mere inanimate object existing for his convenience causes the chair to engage in an amusing and, to the young man, exasperating, game of tag. The chair resists him, struggling and then sliding out from under him as he attempts to sit down. Finally, the man gives up, reconciled to sitting on the floor. Only then does the chair approach him and attempt to woo him; when he finally realizes that he must treat the chair as his equal, the two exchange roles briefly, with the chair sitting on the young man, before the normal relationship is resumed. The music of Ravi Shanker provides a whimsical accompaniment to the action. The filmmaker has said of A Chairy Tale, "It involves a generalized human situation, makes a comment on the behavior of one human being to another, although the other human being is a chair."

NFBC

1957

10 minutes

b&w

#### Utilization

In a broad sense, A Chairy Tale is concerned with the way man relates to his environment. More specifically, it says something about all the aspects of everyday life which he takes for granted. The film may be interpreted in any number of ways: from a consideration of the artist's attitude towards his materials, to the ways men relate to one another. For film study, A Chairy Tale may be analyzed as an example of "pixillation" technique.

## Questions

1. Is A Chairy Tale simply a fairy tale about a chair or does it convey a message?
2. Is there significance in the fact that McLaren chose an Eastern musician to supply the soundtrack for this film?
3. Compare the conflict situation in McLaren's Neighbors with that in A Chairy Tale.
4. What is "pixillation" animation? What did the word originally mean? How is the technique accomplished?

## Related Films

The Mood of ZenNeighbors

Changing Art in a Changing World

This is a somewhat simplistic treatment of the subject which emphasizes the importance of developing aesthetic awareness or an "educated eye." It brings up some valid considerations: Why does art change? What elements of the past should be retained? Art, it is pointed out, reflects the changing environment. The function of art (which is not really stated in the film itself) may remain unchanged, but its form changes. Change may be natural or manmade, sudden or evolutionary. It is necessary for man to change with art. The two basic energy sources in art are proposed to be the artist's intensified seeing processes and his trusting of his inner thoughts and feelings. The influence of primitive art on modern painting and sculpture is briefly shown. The film suggests that today's art often expresses dissatisfaction with modern technology and the ills of society. "Visual pollution" of the atmosphere may have resulted in minimal art, pop art, and related movements. With the exception of a short sequence dealing with environmental design, architecture, and city planning, the film is limited to graphic art and sculpture. The former examples are strictly decorative, the latter are mainly traditional forms. Although the photography is acceptable, the choice of material is unimaginative. The narration is pedantic, and the script tends to run in clichés. In spite of these criticisms, Changing Art in a Changing World makes some good points and will probably be most effective at the junior high level. For high school students, The Many Worlds of Art or Meaning in Modern Painting are more challenging presentations.

BFA

1967

21 Minutes

color

### Utilization

An imaginative teacher will encourage critical appraisal of the film's basic premises: Are seeing and feeling the two basic energy sources of the artist? Does art reflect the changing world? Do the students agree with the film's value judgments? Is the kind of art shown any longer relevant? Is it necessary for man to change with art, as the film suggests, or is the converse true?

### Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

Art: What Is It? Why Is It?

The Many Worlds of Art

## Chromophobia

In this animated fable by Belgian Raoul Servais, a standardized army attempts to impose its dictatorial rule on a happy kingdom. The invading army is completely black and white and attempts to drain all color from the kingdom, converting buildings to prisons, balloons to balls and chains, and the inhabitants to black and white striped prisoners. A small girl saves and nurtures one red flower, and it is this spot of beauty and color which eventually enables the people to overcome the oppressors and restore their free, colorful world. Chromophobia's central message is clear but its symbolism is open to various interpretations and for this reason it is a popular film with teenagers. The flower may represent beauty, or love, or freedom.

IFB  
BFA

1968

11 minutes

color

### Utilization

Chromophobia will be particularly good for discussion of the issues of freedom and love, but it may also be applied to a consideration of the role of art and the artist in society. It will be useful for a study of the nature of color, its symbolic value, and its properties (such as warmth, coolness, and intensity). The film may be considered in relation to its use of one color in an otherwise monochromatic composition.

### Questions

1. Why do you think the film was entitled Chromophobia?
2. What does color represent in this film?
3. What does black and white represent in this film.

4. Why did the filmmaker choose red for the flower, rather than blue or yellow? What feelings do we associate with each of these colors?

Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

Color

The Hand

The Shooting Gallery

Civilisation: A Personal View

This much-publicized and favorably received series of thirteen 52-minute films featuring British art historian Sir Kenneth Clark was originally produced for BBC television and subsequently released on 16 mm for school, college, and museum use. The series traces the development of Western civilization, beginning with the period immediately after the fall of Rome, and ending with the twentieth century, pulling together significant historical events, philosophical and religious landmarks, and the art and culture of each period. The result is an impressive humanistic document which shows the relationship of art to the age in which it is born. The titles in the series are listed below:

- Program #1: The Frozen World
- Program #2: The Great Thaw
- Program #3: Romance and Reality
- Program #4: Man--The Measure of All Things
- Program #5: The Hero As Artist
- Program #6: Protest and Communication
- Program #7: Grandeur and Obedience
- Program #8: The Light of Experience
- Program #9: The Pursuit of Happiness
- Program #10: The Smile of Reason
- Program #11: The Worship of Nature
- Program #12: The Fallacies of Hope
- Program #13: Heroic Materialism



A study guide is available with the films. In addition, Lord Clark's book Civilisation is available in paperback, published by Harper & Row.

TIME LI

1970

52 minutes

color

### The Critic

The Critic, created and narrated by Mel Brooks and directed and produced by Ernest Pintoff, is an hilarious and sophisticated comment on the uninitiated and literal-minded filmgoer, and, more generally, on the work of art and its perceiver. The scene is a movie theater. As abstract shapes appear on the screen, the comments of a man in the audience may be heard. Although he is supposedly at a French movie ("Two dollars out the window, Maurie") he could just as well be the man on the street who finds himself trapped in a museum or art gallery, forced to look at paintings which mean nothing to him. Our critic's comments are excruciating, but not so unusual that we haven't overheard them (or made them ourselves) at some time. The film's subtlety is increased by the fact that the images which appear on the screen really are banal and hackneyed. The question occurs: is our critic really as crass and ignorant as he appears or is he simply one of those courageous individuals who dares to announce that the emperor has no clothes on?

BF                      1963                      5 minutes                      color

#### Utilization

The Critic is not only an amusing little film which could be used to introduce a study of perception and attitude formation, but it may also be used with more sophisticated groups to introduce discussion about the role of the critic in general.

### Questions

1. What is art?
2. What is (are) the function(s) of art?
3. How much of what we see is in the art object, and how much is in ourselves? How often do we see, not objective reality, but what we want to see?
4. Are the other voices ~~in the movie~~ theater important? Why do others "shhhhh" the critic?

### Related Films

The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They?

Kienholz on Exhibit

Why Man Creates

The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They?

The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They? provides a good introduction to optics and perception for both the art student and the non-art major. A visually attractive and useful film its greatest appeal for the teacher lies in its generalizability. It opens with a brief explanation of the structure and functions of the human eye, comparing it with that of other animals. It is seen, for example, that a snail's vision is in black and white and is blurry, while the housefly sees multi-images through its compound eyes. It is seen too that color blindness in humans affects their perception of the environment. From this point, the film moves to a consideration of how artists perceive. Differences between the painter, the sculptor, and the draftsman are explored--the painter being primarily concerned with color, the draftsman with line and tone, and the sculptor with volume and texture. But, the film goes on to point out, perception is not limited to the artist. The interpretation of what anyone sees determines that individual's conception of reality. No one sees everything in its entirety, and each person is most inclined to see what relates to himself. This can change from moment to moment. Well-chosen sequences illustrate these concepts. The film's final segment deals with images of the world of dreams, symbols, and the imagination. This is most effectively presented in a sequence revolving around a rose, in which the "real" and "unreal" worlds coexist. The point is effectively made: seeing is not just a matter of using the eyes: it depends on a variety of external and internal factors.

BFA

1970

11 minutes

color

## Utilization

The Eyes Have It . . . Or Do They? is useful for both art and humanities courses, since it provides an introduction to optics and the psychology of perception, as it relates to normal life and to the activity of the artistic individual. Used with films like Time Is, Where Time Is a River, or Reflections in Space, it will help to reinforce the concept of a relationship between subjective experience and perception. A screening of the film might precede a studio project in which individuals render subjective interpretations of the same subject, anything from a concrete arrangement of objects, such as a still life, to the recollection of a dream.

## Questions

1. What does the following statement mean: "You are what you perceive."
2. How does a painter's perception differ from that of a sculptor?
3. What does the phrase "seeing in the mind's eye" mean?

## Related Films

An Introduction to Visual Illusions

Reflections in Space

Same Subject--Different Treatment

Time Is

Where Time Is a River

Gallery

Gallery provides a kinestatic view of the history of art, covering three thousand years in six minutes. It has great value as entertainment or as a teaser to introduce a study of the history of art. The works are arranged more or less chronologically so that it is possible to discern something of the development of various periods, but one is also aware of a thematic unity throughout. The images have been carefully selected and juxtaposed, and the musical accompaniment is beautifully matched to the images, which come right up to the most significant and recent works of the early '70s. Viewers have expressed reactions to this film which range from indignation that the filmmaker has taken such liberties with revered artworks, to enthusiasm for its technical excellence and its sophisticated new approach to art history. Regardless of how one reacts, Gallery is a considerable accomplishment which molds over two thousand paintings, drawings, and etchings into a unified experience, using variable durations, split screens, tilts, pans, zooms, and an effective soundtrack.

PFP

1971

6 min.

color

## Utilization

This is not a film to encourage discussion or study of a particular period, since it runs the gamut of three thousand years. But it may be just as effective, or even more effective, than a quick tour of the major art galleries of the world. Ideally, the film should be seen more than once, since the images have significance in terms of their juxtapositioning, and much can be grasped in a second viewing which escapes one the first time. The film will be of interest to students.

of film, since it is one of the longest and most successful kinestasis films produced to date.

#### Questions

1. What is kinestasis? Why is this a particularly suitable word to describe this technique?
2. Describe the basic structure of Gallery from the point of view of overall composition, rhythm and pacing, selection and arrangement of images and music.
3. Do you consider this a successful film? Why or why not?

#### Related Films

Art: What Is It? Why Is It?

The Many Worlds of Art

Images & Things series

Images & Things is a series of thirty 20-minute programs produced by the National Instructional Television Center during the year 1971-72, and made available through educational networks in Canada and the United States for school use. It is the result of the combined efforts of art education experts and television specialists from twenty-six agencies in the United States and Canada. Content designers were John W. Cataldo and Alice M. Schwartz. The series, which was designed for 10-to-13 year olds, but which may be used with grades four through nine, attempts to direct the students' attention to the aesthetic and humanistic aspects of art, and to give them a clearer understanding of its relationship to their own lives. The program notes to the series describe it thus: "Images & Things focuses on the arts as they speak about life through a variety of themes--the land, the sea; people experiencing joy and sorrow, people at work, people celebrating; events in urban, suburban, and rural life; images and sounds of nature; the way man forms and reforms objects, his rituals, his dreams, his dress, the things he builds, and the things he envisions." Images & Things has three major purposes: to foster appreciation of aesthetic qualities of nature and the manmade world; to encourage students to describe, analyze, and interpret visual images; and to help students to understand various media so that they can use them in their own work. Some of the titles in the series are as follows:

Devils, Monsters, and Dragons

Dreams and Fantasy

Everyone Makes Things



Here to There

Houses for Worship

The Human Image

Making the Unseen Visible

Plazas, Malls, and Squares

In addition, there are three 30-minute teacher in-service programs.

All of the programs are also distributed in 16mm format from the

National Television Center. Since the films are not intended primarily

for use at the secondary level, and since an extensive teachers'

manual is available for the series, the individual films have not been

dealt with in this listing.

Kienholz on Exhibit

This documentary filmed at the Los Angeles County Museum by the National Film Board of Canada has the distinction of being a social comment on a social comment. The amazingly candid reactions of gallery goers are captured at an exhibition of the controversial artist's works. Edward Kienholz, an American artist who makes use of found objects to create sculpture and environments, is known for his '49 Ford, World War II brothel, and "The Beanery." As the film indicates, many people interpret his works as decadent, sensational, and sordid. In fact, this is the crux of the film's comment. It exposes the naiveté of a public which expects all its art to be pretty and its subject matter sweet. Kienholz directs much of his work, with its protest against the dehumanizing aspects of our culture, to the younger generation, and his appeal is often strong with them. The filmed interviews indicate, in fact, that the younger viewers have a deeper grasp of what he is saying, and are more challenged by it, than their elders are. This is not a pretty film. Nevertheless, it is hilarious at times, especially when it captures the spontaneous comments and facial expressions of the indignant and bewildered gallery patrons. At other times it is disturbing and pathetic. But at no time is it irrelevant. It is exceptionally well edited; considering that it was shot under conditions where were far from ideal, the photography and sound are excellent. The choice of music is most appropriate, especially the theme song, "Tell It Like It Is."

MGHT

1969

23 minutes

b&amp;w

### Utilization

Kienholz on Exhibit will be most relevant to a study of the work of this artist, or of any artist or movement engaged in social comment. It will initiate discussion on the purpose of art and its catalytic role in society. It is recommended that the instructor preview the film before showing it to students.

### Questions

1. What elements of our society does Kienholz deal with in his art?
2. Is it enough for an artist to expose the evils of society? If not, what else is needed? Does Kienholz qualify as an artist?
3. Compare the works of Kienholz with those of George Segal. What significant differences are apparent?
4. Why do you think Kienholz prefers cast-off materials for his constructions?
5. Do you see any similarities between Kienholz on Exhibit and

### The Critic

### Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

The Critic

### The Many Worlds of Art

The Many Worlds of Art is a symphonic music-painting composition in which music is used instead of words to enhance sensitivity to the ultimate meaning of painting. The film begins with a confusing babble of voices using terms commonly used by art critics to describe paintings. But it is pointed out that art has levels which are not easily explainable. Every work of art exists on a spiritual level as well as a material level. The visible or material aspects can be described, discussed, dissected. They encompass the artist's use of formal elements, his symbols and techniques, but none of this reaches the spiritual levels, the inner life of the painting. Man, the observer-creator, has a dual nature. This duality is seen in the qualities of sight and insight, fact and feeling, intellect and emotion. A synthesis between these levels is necessary for understanding to exist. Words are inadequate, but, it is proposed, music has the power to bridge the gap between the physical and spiritual worlds and bring emotion into play so that the intellect can more fully comprehend. Consequently, music is used in this film to lecture on painting. The music selected is not related in time or geography to the paintings, but common content and similar concerns form the basis for the juxtaposition.

The music-painting composition is divided into four movements: first, "The Religious Spirit," idealistic and passionate; second, "Surrealism," the secrets, hidden loves and fears of the human subconscious; third, "Abstraction," the search for reality or the escape from it; and fourth, "Social Painting," man's relationship to man and nature. For each of

these movements, music and paintings are juxtaposed in an interesting manner. For instance, in the first movement, a Flemish depiction of Mary weeping at the foot of the cross (Van der Weyden) is linked by the music to Picasso's "Weeping Woman." The film concludes with a cryptic "THE END. . . or the beginning?" which brings the viewer full circle. Presumably, the music having bridged the gap between the material and spiritual levels of painting, and having enabled the intellect to comprehend more fully the meaning of the paintings shown, the viewer is now in a position to articulate his responses. This is a meaty film and the material is provocatively presented. It will probably be necessary after an initial viewing to go back to the beginning and re-view the basic premises of the film. The only limiting factor is that the film deals only with paintings produced before 1960. There is no mention of more recent movements such as the color painters, minimal art, pop or op, etc. Perhaps this will suggest possibilities for further experiments with this idea.

STERNBERG

1962

23 minutes

color

#### Utilization

The Many Worlds of Art will be useful for discussion of the qualities which are held in common among the arts, and since it is rather unique in that it attempts to be a creative work in itself, it may serve as a stimulus to students to experiment with music, art, dance, theater, and language. It may be shown to classes in music or art appreciation, humanities, or interdisciplinary groups. It may also be used in an art history course to establish some basic genres.

### Questions

1. Do you agree with the film's basic premise?
2. What do you think the film's final statement means? (THE END . . . or the beginning?)
3. What qualities were similar in the music and paintings of the "Religion" movement? Of the "Abstraction" movement? Of the "Surrealism" movement? Of the "Social Comment" movement?
4. Is the music successful? What kinds of music could be used with a treatment of painting in the '60s and '70s? How would you break up the paintings (and artists) of this period?

### Related Films

Abstraction

Art, People, Feelings

Gallery

Kienholz on Exhibit

Meaning in Modern Painting? Part 1

Perhaps the most disarming thing about this film is the absence of a defensive stance, or an overt attempt to prove the existence of meaning in modern painting. Instead, the viewer is simply bombarded with brief, succinct, memorable statements of artists who painted over the last eighty or ninety years, accompanied by selected examples of their works which shed light on their comments and philosophies. The first thing the viewer hears is an off-screen voice asking "Meaning in modern painting?" This is followed by laughter, but the laughter is soon followed by the statements and works of the following:

Van Gogh: "I have tried with red and green to express the terrible passions of humanity."

Cezanne: "To paint is to grasp a harmony among numerous relationships."

Gauguin: "Art is an abstraction."

Matisse: "A work of art has in itself its own absolute meaning."

Picasso: "Art is not truth. Art is a lie that makes us realize truth."

Braque: "The senses deform. The mind forms."

Kandinsky: "He who looks at a painting ought to see it not as a reproduction of the exterior aspects of things."

Chagall: "The interior world is perhaps more real than the apparent world."

de Chirico: "One should not forget that a painting ought always to reflect a profound feeling, and that profound means strange, and strange means not known."

Schwitters: "Anything an artist spits is art."

Magritte: "A pure and powerful sentiment saved me from the traditional chase after formal perfection. My interest lay in provoking an emotional shock."

Mondrian: "Isn't art concrete logic?"

Klee: "The aim is to reveal the 'invisible.'"

Miro: "Painting is made as we make love."

Dali: "Systemize the confusion."

Pollock: "I want to be in the picture."

Mathieu: "A real avant-garde has deep roots in tradition."

Rauschenberg: "I'm in the present, I try to celebrate the present."

Vasarely: "Art will stimulate the human biochemical complex."

As the narrator observes, the only agreement seems to be a negative one--all the artists mentioned agree that art does not have to mirror physical reality. The humor, irony, intellect, and feeling expressed in these quotes and actualized in the paintings does much to prove that there is meaning in modern painting. But the film goes on to present a montage of paintings produced by artists from the fifteenth through twentieth centuries in an attempt to indicate the wide variety of expression. It is pointed out that the great artists have never been mere imitators of nature, and that the realism which held sway in Europe from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries is the exception rather than the norm in the history of art. Primitive art has many affinities with this century. Part I concludes with the question: Are we to conclude that modern art is a language without meaning?

EBEC

1967

30 minutes

color

Utilization

Meaning in Modern Painting? provides an intelligent approach to a consideration of the aims of the artist. It will help to break down stereotyped ideas about realism and abstraction and will assist the student in relating artists and movements.



### Questions

1. How have modern artists attempted to convey abstract concepts such as human emotions, truth, harmony in relationship to nature, etc.? For example, how does Cezanne use harmonious spatial relationships? How does Van Gogh use color? Discuss the development of Mondrian's painting.
2. "The real avant-garde has deep roots in tradition." How does this statement by Mathieu relate to his paintings?
3. What does the word "abstraction" mean in literal terms? Were all the painters cited in this film abstractionists?
4. Can you trace a direction in which Western art may have been moving in the past century?

### Related Films

#### Abstraction

Art: What Is It? Why Is It?

Changing Art In a Changing World

#### Gallery

The Many Worlds of Art

Who Is: Victor Vasarely

Meaning in Modern Painting: Part 2

In this sequel to Meaning in Modern Painting? the language of painting is likened to visual music. It is seen that the qualities of line, light, color, and paint itself, which all had a dual existence from the fifteenth through nineteenth centuries (both as the object represented and the painting per se), have all changed. Color, for instance, becomes an element of the language of painting, with an existence apart from any object. Thus, it becomes possible to have a "Blue Boy" without the Boy. It becomes possible to concentrate on the basic elements of painting when we no longer have to worry about whether a painting is a representation of something. Our attention shifts from realism to the painting itself. Color achieves a new freedom and power with the rejection of realism or illusionism, as do the other elements of painting. The point is also made that the artist's traditional frames of reference have changed or disappeared. Most artists now consider that traditional religious beliefs are no longer strong enough to act as frames of reference, as they did in the Middle Ages. Story telling is being left to writers, and photographers portray the visual world. What is left for the painter? As a result, many have turned inward to portray man's inner nature. Klee, Van Gogh, Chagall, and Magritte are used as examples. Alternatively, painting itself becomes the frame of reference, as seen in the works of the action painters and abstract expressionists.

EBEC

1967

23 minutes

color

## Utilization

Meaning in Modern Painting: Part 2 will be most effective when shown in relation with Part 1, but it is also able to stand alone as a consideration of the major themes of modern art.

## Questions

1. Discuss the development of photography as a motivating force in the visual "revolution" in painting which began in the 1800's. Why did the camera have an effect on painting?
2. Most people are aware of having subjective or objective associations with particular colors. What colors do you associate with the following: anger, depression, power, love, joy, fear, youth, old age?
3. What are the frames of reference used by artists today as compared with those of the nineteenth century? the Renaissance? the Middle Ages?
4. How does minimal art reflect contemporary thought?
5. What is the significance of conceptual art?
6. Can you predict new directions for art in the twenty-first century?

## Related Films

AbstractionArt, People, Feelings

The Mood of Zen

In this film produced for the Society of Comparative Philosophy, Alan Watts discusses Japanese Buddhism. Scenes of Japanese gardens, their large expanses of bare sand broken by clumps of trees, rocks, shrubbery, and flowing water illustrate the basic teachings of Zen. It is seen that man and nature form one pattern of activity, one process. Man is a part of nature just as death is a part of life. Man is nature becoming conscious of itself; as a result he is able to cooperate with nature. Flowing with the stream of life frees one for creativity in art and life. Art in the East is considered not as a work of conquering nature or imposing order on it, but simply as another work of nature. Meditation is important because it produces awareness of the now. Just as in order to hear, one must stop talking, so in order to see, one must stop thinking. Koto music accompanies the narration. The Mood of Zen is an excellent introduction to Zen Buddhism, particularly for the art student, since it relates Japanese art to the philosophy from which it springs.

HP

1968

13 minutes

color

## Utilization

The Mood of Zen demonstrates yet another way of increasing awareness of the natural environment, and suggests ways of increasing one's creative potential. The film provides a thought-provoking introduction to the art of the Far East, or to any contemporary culture which has been influenced by the East. It will be useful in both art appreciation and humanities studies.

### Questions

1. How do the themes expressed in this film relate to the current concern over the environment in this country?
2. Compare the ideas concerning man and nature as expressed in this film with the Christian concept of man's dual nature. Are the resulting art works different? In what ways?
3. Explain the significance of the spatial arrangements in a Japanese garden. How does such landscaping relate to other facets of Zen?

### Related Films

Buddhism, Man, and Nature

Cry of the Marsh

Leaf

The Worship of Nature (Civilisation series)

Museums Without Walls series

Museums Without Walls is a series of five two-hour film programs produced by Universal Education and Visual Arts, and supervised by Douglas Cooper. The series, which deals with artists, architects, and art movements, sets out to bring widely-scattered collections from several continents into "a single focal dimension." It is available to institutions and organizations in five segments, one program per week over a five week period. It may be purchased, obtained on a "fund raising plan" basis or on a non-admission rental plan. The programs are as follows:

Program I

Picasso: War, Peace and Love  
Goya

Program II

Giotto and the Pre-Renaissance  
Crete and Mycenae

Program III

The Art Conservator  
Kinetic Art in Paris  
The Impressionists

Program IV

Le Corbusier  
The Greek Temple

Program V

The Cubist Epoch  
Germany--Dada

Museums Without Walls, along with Sir Kenneth Clark's Civilisation:

A Personal View, which consists of thirteen one-hour films, will provide an unusual and comprehensive introduction to art as it has

changed and developed through the centuries. One of the most favorable aspects of these series is that they relate the cultural, social and political milieu to the works and artists represented. More than anything else, they create a broad framework upon which the student may build. Teachers may elect to show the films, then focus down on individual artists or movements, using slides, reproductions, gallery visits, etc. Both presentations, popular as they are, have limitations for the serious student, but as a general introduction to the humanities, they are admirable.

This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Message

In this film, McLuhan puts forward his explosive ideas about the manner in which all media of communication shape and alter society, concentrating particularly upon the new electronic media and instruments which are speeding up our lives, processing information, and most fundamentally, shaping our sensibilities. Television is thought by McLuhan to epitomize the electric age, but his comments and the accompanying visual images range over education, art, music, perception, politics, transportation, cities, and popular culture. Interspersed with his comments are those of his critics, including Ivan Karp, Malcolm Morley, and Inez Garson. Some of the major theories brought out are:

1. We are living in the electric age which has produced a "brand new world of all-at-onceness." Time has in a sense ceased and space has vanished. We now live in a simultaneous happening, a global village, with its inevitable loss of individual privacy and heightened involvement. This has in fact caused society to turn inward, but in the sense that one's whole being is engaged.

2. Our educational system is still by and large existing in the 19th century. McLuhan says, "The child knows that in going to school he is in a sense interrupting his education." The mass media, the electric age, have more to offer him outside of the school. This brings in the confrontation between print and electric technology. McLuhan says books are obsolete; they have become works of art.

3. For the most part, society looks through a rear-view mirror. It still exists in "Bonanza Land" because it feels threatened by the new age. The artists in society live in the present; in fact, they



are often a jump ahead of technology. Art and culture have become big business. The arts reveal a world of simultaneous relationships.

4. Politics are influenced by television in that politicians now have to be television personalities in order to survive.

5. The effect of television commercials on the motion picture industry has led to fast cutting and removal of the story line. In removing the story line, the filmmaker forces the audience to participate creatively. Hollywood's influence is worldwide; emerging nations demand the material things which are a part of its glamour and that of television advertising.

6. McLuhan's definition of "hot" and "cool" and the application of these qualities to mass media. He suggests that the cool medium of television is incompatible with the kind of hot war waged in Vietnam. Uncomfortable involvement is the result.

Ideally, the film should be viewed twice. The visual impact is so strong that on the first viewing it is impossible to absorb all of what McLuhan is saying.

MGHT

1967

53 minutes

color

#### Utilization

This provocative presentation will stimulate creative thinking in general and will inevitably lead to discussion of McLuhan's ideas. It will be useful for a consideration of the role of the artist in society today, and the impact of technology on mass culture. Students from all disciplines will find it thought-provoking and visually exciting. For a study of film techniques, it provides a great deal of variety. In fact, the visual interpretation of McLuhan's theories is one of the most interesting aspects of the film.

### Questions

1. What, in your opinion, is the main purpose of television?
2. Would you consider television an art form?
3. What are the implications of McLuhan's "global village" concept on the arts?
4. Distinguish between "hot" and "cool" media. Is McLuhan's theory that "hot" media are non-involving correct?
5. What would McLuhan say is the role of the artist in today's society? Does this automatically imply social involvement?
6. Compare McLuhan's view of the artist with that of Vasarely, Kienholz, Gilbert, Whitney.

### Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

Experiments in Motion Graphics

Very Nice, Very Nice

Why Man Creates

This popular film by Paul Bass consists of a series of explorations, episodes, and comments on creativity. Why Man Creates is a fast-moving, witty examination of the creative process which does not limit itself to the arts. The film is divided into eight segments representing stages in the process. The first, called "The Edifice," is an animated sequence which traces in four minutes the development of civilization. The next stage, called "Fooling Around," shows that manipulating reality in a playful manner may lead to valuable and productive ideas. In "The Process," a young artist struggles with his materials, which resist him and finally develop a life of their own. In "Judgment" we see society's part in the creative process: the candid remarks of the public are followed by the artist's rebuttal. "A Parable" deals with an atypical ball which bounces higher than the others. "Digression" is an ironic comment on the relationship between ideas and institutions, as seen in an interview situation. "The Search" shows the dedication of scientists who pursue research in spite of failures and setbacks. And finally, the film ends with a celebration of the individual and his unique power to create, using examples drawn from the history of art, science, religion, politics, and technology. Each segment of this film has its own statement and its own style. The editing is sharp, the ideas are presented rapidly. Visuals and soundtrack move so quickly, and so many ideas are communicated, that a second viewing of the film is recommended. The diversity of the film's parts teases the viewer into the creative act of integrating the segments for himself.

PFP

1968

25 minutes

color

### Utilization

Why Man Creates operates on so many levels, including that of pure entertainment, that it is useful for discussions of creativity at almost any level. Its greatest merit is that it does not limit creativity to the arts--as a result it is of interest to students possessing science backgrounds. It encourages discussion on the role of creative thinking and action in society. Ultimately, it will be discussed as film, simply because it employs so many techniques and is a creative feat in its own right.

### Questions

1. What is the film's answer to the question, "Why does man create?"
2. What are some of the comments the film makes about creativity?
3. What is the significance of the segment entitled "A Parable?"
4. Can you identify some of the techniques employed in this film?
5. Structurally, how does the film work? What elements hold the segments together?

### Related Films

The Magic Machines

People Who Make Things

The Towers

Very Nice, Very Nice

This is Arthur Lipsett's first film, in which he combines stills and motion picture footage, juxtaposing images which range from buildings to bombs to faces of a passing crowd. The general effect is to portray the chaotic quality of life in America. Behind the buildings and the activity lie the uncomprehending faces of people on the street who seem to experience deep anxieties of which they are unaware or which they will not face. The irrationality of man, his confusion about the meaning of life, his attitudes toward death, war, and politics, come through, as well as his foolish and unthinking optimism which is expressed again and again in the phrase "Very nice, very nice." Snatches of conversation and speeches make up the soundtrack. There is a strong emphasis on perception, both visual and spiritual. Many of the faces on the screen look out at the viewer through spectacles, some of them opaque. But whether opaque or transparent, one gets the feeling that the spectacles are of little use. Very Nice, Very Nice was one of the first experiments in the use of kinestasis, and was followed by other "capsule" films such as Charles Braverman's American Time Capsule and World of '68. The television advertising industry has used this technique to advantage.

MGHT

1961

8 minutes

b&amp;w

## Utilization

Although somewhat rough in spots, Very Nice, Very Nice will be useful for classes in film study and film appreciation as well as in discussions of perception and attitude formation. It suggests that

people view reality in different lights, and it presents its own view of reality—that of the filmmaker. Very Nice, Very Nice may be considered as one artist's statement, and contrasted with other views.

#### Questions

1. What do you think Very Nice, Very Nice attempts to say? about people? about advertising? about life?
2. What is the significance of eyes, eyeglasses, etc. in this film?
3. What technique is employed by Lipsett in Very Nice, Very Nice? What criticisms do you have of his use of this technique, in light of what has been done in the past ten years?

#### Related Films

This is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Message

#### Gallery

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Where Time Is a River

A carefully orchestrated blend of music and images recreates the worlds of Rousseau, Gauguin, Chagall, and Leger. The opening line "... from here to there. . ." suggests that the film may trace the development of man. This is substantiated by the order in which the paintings are presented. The primordial jungle mysteries of Rousseau are followed by Gauguin's primitive Tahitian studies; the sophisticated dream world of Chagall is replaced by the machine age of Leger. Each section is accompanied by appropriate music and camera techniques are varied to emphasize the unique character of each artist's work. For example, the Rousseau section employs jungle noises and quick furtive close-ups of the wild beasts. In contrast, the Chagall material is light and bright, with a preponderance of strings and woodwinds, and images float and fly across the screen. No narration is employed: the film is not intended to provide an in-depth exposure, or to be a substitute for the paintings themselves. Rather, it is to be used as a motivational tool-- an introduction to the particular visions of four painters. A list of the works represented appears at the film's conclusion. A discussion guide which includes a brief biography of each artist, questions for discussion, supplementary activities, book, slide, and print bibliographies, is available with the film upon request.

CMC

1966

18 minutes

color

## Utilization

Such a film is useful in interdisciplinary programs, art classes, and music appreciation. The camera techniques, such as the use of

superimpositions and panning to create the illusion of motion, are noteworthy. Richard Peaslee's score is excellent, and will be of interest to music students. The film serves as a fine prelude to a museum visit, or as a stimulus to discussion.

Related Films

Changing Art in a Changing World

Gallery

The Many Worlds of Art



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ARTISTIC EXPERIENCE: MAKING IT

The films assembled in this chapter have one common characteristic: they bring the artist to the classroom and enable the act of creation to take place in our midst. As a result, the viewer's horizons are broadened and his perceptions influenced to a degree which might not be possible even if the artist were actually present, since one of the most important qualities of a well-made film is its ability to capture only the vital elements of an experience and render it meaningful to an audience.

Each of these films brings the realm of art down to earth. Artists are seen to be real people in touch with the real world, working out their individual ideas and philosophies in widely varying ways and with vastly different materials. Since a wide spectrum of activity is depicted in these selections, students will identify with the problems and successes of at least some of these individuals. As is the case with all well-made documentaries, these films convey immediacy and a sense of having captured a slice of life.

In People Who Make Things the student will meet three individuals: a girl who designs and constructs larger-than-life-size dolls, a boy who decorates wedding cakes and aspires to be one of the best cake decorators around, and a man who designs dune buggies and does custom paint jobs. In The Towers he will meet Simon Rodilla, the mysterious,

lonely immigrant who sought to beautify his environment. In Who Is: Victor Vasarely he will be challenged by the space age ideas of a brilliant artist and scientist. And in Eskimo Artist Kenojuak he will encounter the gentle, reflective, and mystical personality of a print-maker who also cares for a home and children. He will watch these individuals at work; see how their ideas form, change, and result in finished work; listen to them as they talk about their work and their approach to life; and in turn he will reflect on his own life and ideas about art.

In contrast to the documentary which explores the personality and working habits of the creative individual is the instructional film which tells one how to do or how to make something. Even as early as the 1950's the value of the "how to do it" film was in question. There was little evidence that teachers wanted to use films which provided a full demonstration and explanation of art techniques, thus robbing them of the opportunity of doing the teaching they were trained to do.<sup>13</sup> However, twenty years later, this type of film is still being turned out by educational film producers in surprising quantity, which leads one to believe that there must be a demand for films demonstrating how to make a puppet, how to weave, how to sculpt in paper, etc. Films of this nature have been omitted deliberately from this listing. There are good and bad "how to do it" films, but many are simply mediocre. Most are craft-oriented and are designed for young audiences, so that we are not concerned with them here. In addition, many of these "technique"

<sup>13</sup> Charles D. Gaitskell, "The Art and Craft Film in General Education," in Films on Art 1952, ed. William McK. Chapman (New York: American Federation of the Arts, 1952), p. 21.

presentations are better suited to a single concept format such as sound filmstrip or eight millimetre which also have the advantage of being less expensive.

Some films of this type may be useful with high school students, such as Silkscreen Fundamentals and Silkscreen Techniques (both distributed by Bailey-Film Associates), but the teacher who wishes to use this type of instructional tool should have little difficulty in selecting a production on the basis of a description published in a distributor's catalog or in a university or school district publication. It is important to check the production or release date of any film being considered: a recent production date should ensure that format and techniques demonstrated in the film will be reasonably up to date. Most distributors now include the production date in their catalog listings. Distributor descriptions of such films should prove adequate for selection. The subject matter of these productions does not lend itself to extensive annotations or suggestions for utilization, as do the majority of the films listed in this chapter. For that reason, as well as for those listed above, such films have been omitted.

There are a number of films included in other chapters which are concerned with individual artists. Some of these, such as Kienholz on Exhibit, are more concerned with the works of the artist and the reactions of his audience, and so fall into "Chapter II." Others, such as The Magic World of Karel Zeman and The Eye Hears, the Ear Sees, deal with filmmakers and have been included in "Chapter IV." Nevertheless, although they have been grouped in other categories by this compiler, the teacher may find them very useful for a study of the artistic experience.

Finally, it will be seen that a number of the films in this chapter and elsewhere explore the relationship of art to technology. Some artists, such as Vasarely and the Whitneys, use technology to create a new aesthetic. Others, such as Kienholz, react against the dehumanization of art and society. And others, such as Richard Hunt, attempt to effect a synthesis of natural form and modern technology.

The Art of Maurits Escher

This film has been selected because it provides a rare interview with an artist whose graphic works are of considerable current interest. Unfortunately, there are a number of factors which make The Art of Maurits Escher a disappointing film. It is slow-paced, the camera is hand-held and shaky at times, the artist's Dutch accent is sometimes difficult to understand, and there is some repetitious footage of his family which does not contribute to an understanding of Escher's personality or work. Nevertheless, the film does combine shots of a number of Escher's prints of strangely-evolving animals and surreal architectural forms with the artist's comments about them. Maurits Escher fans will overlook the deficiencies of the film and the teacher who is anxious to introduce students to the artist will find it a useful if somewhat limited tool.

CORF

1969

30 minutes

color

Utilization

Escher is unique in that he does not fit easily into any tradition, past or present. Although he blends realism with fantasy and often includes elements of the grotesque, he cannot simply be labeled a surrealist. His woodcuts, engravings, and lithographs will be of interest to students of printmaking, and because of the evolving nature of his imagery and the scroll-like format of many of his works, to students of animation. Those with an aptitude for mathematics or architecture will be drawn to the works which he himself classifies under such headings as "Regular Division of a Plane," "Unlimited Space," "Mirror Images," "Polyhedrons," "Impossible Buildings." The film should be supplemented

by prints of his graphic works, some of which are available in poster sizes. A book entitled The Graphic Works of M. C. Escher is available in paperback. Of particular interest is his "Introduction" and "Classification and Description of the Numbered Reproductions" which appears at the beginning of this edition.

#### Questions

1. Discuss the relation of technique to subject matter in Escher's work.
2. What are the major preoccupations of the artist? Can you compare his work with that of another artist with similar interests?
3. How does Escher make use of positive and negative space?

#### Related Films

##### Abstraction

##### Discovering Perspective

##### The Eyes Have It. . . Or Do They?

##### An Introduction to Visual Illusions

##### The Magic World of Karel Zeman

Calder's Circus

The Circus is a sort of happening in which Alexander Calder acts as master of ceremonies or deus ex machina for his tiny circus performers. His wife, stationed in the wings, puts records on a gramophone in response to his cues. The circus, first begun by the artist in the early '20s, grew until by 1929 it had filled five suitcases and Calder decided that enough was enough. The film is a droll and intimate portrayal of the artist, in addition to its merits as a happening. It also points up another aspect of Calder's work which is not so commonly recognized--an element of the grotesque, or a type of black humor. In spite of its tongue-in-cheek frivolity, the more macabre side of circus life may be observed in the gross dancing lady, the slug-like sword swallower, and the lion who looks a little like Calder himself. Interestingly, most of the characters are sooner or later killed off. The lion is shot by his trainer, the "living target" is felled by a flying knife, the wrestlers both die. . . . Perhaps this is no mere circus? At any rate, the film provides a whimsical, informal look at a great artist, and shows that ideas which may seem childish or silly may hold the germs of real drama, or real art, or real life.

MGHT

1964

19 minutes

color

Utilization

In addition to its value as entertainment, Calder's Circus is an excellent film for use at the secondary level to explore the nature of the creative process. It could also precede a study of Calder's work. It will motivate students to attempt similar projects.

## Questions

1. Describe Calder as he appears in this film. What qualities or characteristics come across most strongly?
2. Compare his approach to his circus with the "Fooling Around" section in Why Man Creates and with Gilbert's attitude toward his magic machines.
3. Compare the circus with Calder's drawings and mobiles. What qualities do they share?

## Related Films

The Magic Machines

The Shooting Gallery

Why Man Creates



Eskimo Artist Kenojuak

This documentary combines striking photography, natural sounds, and a well-developed script. The theme is that of shadows: the sun and moon create patterns on the snow; Kenojuak and her husband make shadow plays for their children on the walls of their igloo; she calls her prints of fantastic creatures "shadow pictures"; and when she watches motion pictures of people crossing crowded city streets, Kenojuak says that the people in this faraway world look like shadows. The filmmaker has succeeded in seeing through the eyes of the Eskimo people, and in doing so has created a sensitive portrait, not just of the artist Kenojuak, but of her people and the land which exerts such an influence on every facet of their life. Included are scenes of the Cape Dorset cooperative where Kenojuak works between hunts. Here her drawings are transferred to stone blocks and carved by craftsmen. Others mix the inks and pull the prints. Each print is stamped with three names: those of the artist, the stone carver, and their cooperative. The transitions between scenes are accomplished beautifully through lap dissolves. Motifs from Kenojuak's prints are often repeated in shots of the landscape and the changing sky.

NFBC

1964

20 minutes

color

## Utilization

Eskimo Artist Kenojuak has been included in this chapter because it is essentially a portrait of a particular artist. But it may be used with equal effectiveness in either "Chapter II" or "Chapter IV." It clearly illustrates the role played by environment in the development and subject matter of the artist-craftsman. It is also an excellent documentary.

which reflects a particular approach on the part of the filmmaker-- that of recording from the subject's point of view. The film will also be of interest because of its treatment of an artists' commune. It will generate discussion of Kenojuak's approach to her art, how for her it is simply an extension of her personal world of fantasy and reality, a cooperative effort which involves others in her community.

#### Questions

1. In what ways have a) their environment, b) their pastimes and c) their legends influenced the substance as well as the form of Eskimo art?
2. How do shadows and the shadow games she plays with her children influence Kenojuak's art?
3. Why does Kenojuak refer to her art as "shadow pictures?" Of what importance to her is the sun?
4. How did the filmmaker use shadows to create a picture of Kenojuak and her life style?
5. How does Kenojuak view the big city?
6. Compare the drawings of Kenojuak with those of Maurits Escher.

#### Related Films

The Art of Maurits Escher

People Who Make Things

The Expanding Universe of Sculpture

Shots of massive sculpture in and around the Museum of Modern Art appear as the narrator asks, "What on earth ever happened to sculpture?" There follows a tour of a number of sculptors' studios. The choice of artists and works is somewhat disappointing, since few seem able to speak articulately about their work or ideas. However, the film has a number of things in its favor. For one thing, it does not glorify art or place it out of reach of the aspiring student. In fact, as the narrator David Burt suggests, the nature of art has changed so much that no one can really say whether the creators are really artists at all, but only that they have something strange and compelling to say. Since its purpose seems to be simply to provide an introduction to a variety of current approaches to sculpture, rather than an in-depth study, the film succeeds at that level. The narration is informal and somewhat superficial, intercut with the comments of the sculptors. Rather surprisingly, three women have been included in this film, despite the myth that women seldom create sculpture of any significance or weight. Unfortunately, the film fails to fire the imagination, in spite of the fact that it touches on some exciting developments, such as the light sculpture of John Healy. Nevertheless, it will be useful when considered from the point of view of changing art forms, and it may provide students with ideas. It is not a film to generate discussion.

HP

1970

15 minutes

color

Utilization

The Expanding Universe of Sculpture will be of interest to junior and senior high school classes who are just beginning a study of sculpture.

whether from an historical perspective, or in the studio, or simply as art appreciation.

#### Questions

1. What is light sculpture? What other forms of three-dimensional art can you visualize for the year 2000?
2. What is three-dimensional photography? Is it sculpture or does it belong to the graphic arts?
3. Are traditional modes of art, i.e., drawing, painting, and sculpture dead, as some "artists" contend? Compare the philosophy of Victor Vasarely with that of Andrew Wyeth or Henry Moore.

#### Related Films

Changing Art in a Changing World

Reflections in Space

Who Is: Victor Vasarely

Glass

Glass, filmed in Holland by Bert Haanstra, contrasts the grace and skill of the traditional glass blower with the bustling activity of a glass factory. The glass blowers are seen as they manipulate the rods and blow life into molten glass. As they work, an unusually well-synchronized jazz score accompanies their movements, so that the hands and mouths of the craftsmen as they blow and manipulate their tools actually seem to be producing the sounds made by the instruments. The natural sounds blend too with the music so that the two become almost indistinguishable at times. In contrast, the noise of the machines and the movement of the conveyor belts and the mass production of glassware create a comment on the absence of individuality, aesthetic pleasure, and pride in the industrial worker of today.

MGHT

1960

10 minutes

color

## Utilization

Glass has become something of a classic, a popular choice for film study, art, and creative writing classes. It is also useful for discussion.

## Questions

1. What is Glass about?
2. What artistic and human values are implied in the film?
3. Could the film itself be called a work of art? Why or why not?

## Related Films

People Who Make ThingsPoint of View

The Magic Machines (And Other Tricks)

In this Academy Award-winning short, a young California sculptor, Robert Gilbert, whose primary concern is with what he calls magic, creates whimsical kinetic sculpture from found objects which he collects in the desert. He says, "There's this magic show. Some people live in the magic show. Some people are the magic show. Some people wonder what magic is. And still others know." As Gilbert explains, he scrapes together the leftovers of society, welds them together and paints them brightly to become fantastic animals, like "The Groper," and moving machines, like "Machine 23," which commemorates a political demonstration. Gilbert likes to work and has held a great number of unrelated jobs. He tries to extract everything he can from each learning experience, and he thinks that work is the most satisfying thing in the world "apart from sex, of course." Of his magic machines he says, "I like fantasy; it's realer than most of the reality." About himself he says, "I'm a child, I never grew up. I'm not planning on growing up." As for the relationship between art and the individual he believes that "good art should really affect you and make you stop and wonder and relate yourself to it." The images of the film are Robert Gilbert's sculptures. The voice is his. It provides an honest and amusing look at a contemporary artist, his ideas about art and views on society and life in general.

LCOA

1970

14 minutes

color

## Utilization

The Magic Machines will spark discussion of the role of the artist in society. It invites comparison of Gilbert's work with that of other artists, past and present. It is also useful for a study of film techniques.

### Questions

1. Why does Gilbert use leftover, found, or junk parts of machines in his work, rather than start from scratch?
2. Is his sculpture "pure" art, or social comment, or both?
3. How does art act as a mirror to society? Can the artist affect the social structure?
4. Compare Gilbert's magic machines with Calder's circus.

### Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

Calder's Circus

Kienholz on Exhibit

Richard Hunt--Sculptor

Why Man Creates

Michael Casson, Studio Potter

For Casson, a British craftsman working in Prestwood, Buckinghamshire, technique is the most important element in creating a good pot. We see him in his studio preparing clay, working on the wheel, decorating, firing, and glazing his pieces. These pieces range from coffee pots and mugs with simple lines and matte glazes to large urns with spiky decorations and elaborate lids. A musical score accompanies and emphasizes the artist's activities and off-screen comments. Some of the ideas expressed by Casson include his conviction that the machine should obtrude as little as possible into the work; his enthusiasm for "finding an accident, and then using it afterwards"; the necessity of being at one with the materials; the difficulty of achieving simplicity; the desire that the finished pot should show the movement of the craftsman's fingers. When judging the quality of a work, Casson looks for "spirit" or what he calls "a presence." This spirit, he believes, has something to do with unity. He also believes that the key to making good pots is to make many. Through this, one comes to understand the processes and materials of his craft so that the pots flow naturally from his hands and wheel. In this way, Casson hopes to create more and more "natural" pots.

MGHT

1966

20 minutes

color

## Utilization

Although this film deals with only one potter, it has a high degree of generalizability, and in depicting this one man's approach to his



craft, it is representative of many others. The film succeeds in capturing not only something of the individual, his ideas and preferences, and his way of life, but it also succeeds in saying something about working with one's hands and striving to perfect a particular skill. Casson is typical of many craftsmen who value technical skill and a close relationship with nature and natural textures. For this reason, the film will be of interest to craftsmen. It will also be a useful accompaniment to People Who Make Things. For a discussion of the role of the artist-craftsman in a technological society, it might be shown with Point of View. As an introduction to clay as a medium, the film is informative and aesthetically pleasing. It may also be useful for purposes of comparing the pottery of different cultures and countries. (For instance, there are a number of films on Japanese, Chinese, American Indian, and American ceramics.)

#### Questions

1. What does Casson mean when he talks about "natural" pots?
2. Compare Casson's pots with those of Dik Schwanke in Touch Clay-- a Ceramic Experience. What are the differences in method of working and in the final product?
3. Contrast Casson's attitude to his pottery with that of an artist like Vasarely who would like to see his multiples in homes and industrial centers all over the world. Is there room for both types of art?
4. What are the qualities one should look for in a good pot? Which should take precedence, form or function?

Related Films

Clay (Origin of the Species)

Glass

Point of View

People Who Make Things

People Who Make Things provides a delightful and refreshing look at three totally different people engaged in three different pursuits, but sharing a desire to work with their hands and to produce work of the highest quality of which they are capable. In the process of seeing them at work, the viewer gains an insight into the creative process, meets three unique, engaging personalities, and, hopefully, has his ideas about art stretched.

Angelo Austin decorates wedding cakes. He tries to make each cake more beautiful than the last, and intends to be one of the best cake decorators around. His only regret is "to think that when it leaves here, all people think about is coming in and eating it up. It makes me kind of sad."

Pamela Weir makes life-size and larger-than-life-size wooden dolls for special store displays. She uses ebony, teak, and other exotic woods, and her studio boasts an impressive array of power tools. She remarks, "Sometimes people say, 'Oh really, little girl, what kind of tools do you have?' and I lay something heavy on them, like 'I have a router and a ten-inch unisaw and a twenty-inch band saw. . . .'" Her greatest satisfaction comes from the knowledge that she is an expert at the thing she does. About the creative process she says, "The first step is you think about it, and the second step is you do it, and the third step is you've done it, and the fourth step is you think about another thing, and the fifth step is you do it."

Dean Jeffries designs and builds dune buggies and does custom paint jobs. He says, "I just don't do any complete paint jobs anymore unless the job interests me or unless I can do something different." Like the others, he gets satisfaction out of working with his hands: "I could get dressed up in a tie or suit, but that's not where the action is. Working with your hands is a lot better than working with your mouth."

People Who Make Things brings the realm of art into the everyday world. The film is well made, with some interesting camera work. Its directness and spontaneity is disarming.

CF                      1970                      22 minutes                      color

#### Utilization

People Who Make Things is so full of human interest that it has pure entertainment value in addition to its usefulness as a motivational film in art or vocational areas at all levels, from junior high to adult. It is useful as part of a study of the steps in the creative process, used with films such as Why Man Creates or The Rebels, or for a consideration of the nature and definition of "art," for which This Is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Massage might be an appropriate accompaniment.

#### Questions

1. Is there a difference between making things and being an artist?
2. What qualities do the three people in the film have in common?

Compare them with Simon Rodilla of The Towers or Robert Gilbert of The Magic Machines.

3. What kinds of things do you really enjoy doing? What kinds of things are you good at? How can you develop these skills to the maximum?

Related Films

The Magic Machines

Point of View

The Towers

Why Man Creates

Point of View

Point of View is a brief portrait of four industrial designers. Each expresses his thoughts about his work, its meaning to him, and the "stance" of his creations in a Machine Age which reproduces and distributes them worldwide. Each answers the question: "What point of view have I created by my work?"

American Don Wallance is a designer of table utensils. He first designs a handmade wooden mold, which he carves himself. He emphasizes a "fusion of analysis and intuition" and defines a designer's mind as a computer which is programmed with all the visual images seen since infancy. Brancusi was an early influence on Wallance, which explains why he tries always to "exploit the special qualities of the enduring metal to create sympathetic forms with an organic quality." He is anxious to use the machine to enhance people's lives rather than to degrade the environment.

Arne Jacobsen of Copenhagen designs kitchenware and is also an architect. For him, function is crucial. His work must meet a standard of utility: to design the insulation of an ice bucket, he believes, is really the same problem as designing a wall of a building. Small details are a matter of integrity. For Jacobsen, form always follows function.

Ken Southall, an Englishman working in Glasgow, designs stoneware. Since clay is a uniquely plastic material, small things make a difference: "a slight warpage, false drying, or an unevenness in wall thickness."

Heinrich Loeffelhart, a designer of china in Stuttgart, underlines the importance of teamwork between the designer of china and designer of machinery. The Bauhaus influenced Loeffelhart and his forms and decorations emerge from the Bavarian countryside, or from ancient Bavarian architecture. A classic design of his, a long slender urn shape, stems from the shapes of tree trunks or castle towers.

AMEDFL

1970

17 minutes

color

#### Utilization

Point of View is one of the few films available on industrial design which provides an insight into the personal ideas of designers, and shows the relation of aesthetic and functional qualities in today's industry. It will be of interest to students of industrial arts, commercial art and industrial design, as well as to humanities-oriented classes and art students.

#### Questions

1. Why does Don Wallance say that he derives his forms "like a craftsman?" What are some of the visual influences he recalls?
2. How does Arne Jacobsen approach industrial design and architecture?
3. What role does the material play in the work of these four men?
4. What point of view is expressed by Loeffelhart's china?

#### Related Films

##### Glass

##### People Who Make Things

##### Who Is: Victor Vasarely

The Rebels/279: Ecology of Design

A class of architecture students at Washington State University participate in an experimental happening in which they come to terms with the practical problems of actualizing an idea, and learn first-hand that architecture must be planned by human beings for human beings. Students begin by working individually, building models of living spaces. The second step in the exercise comes when they are asked to relate their individual modules in order to create a workable community. This is first mapped out on paper. Then they head for the hills with their instructor to actualize their community in plywood, rope, and other materials. The enthusiastic and thoughtful comments of the students as they work on their structures, both individually and on a team basis, show the value of experiencing first hand the materials to be used in the construction of a building, and the necessity of designing and building to relate to both environment and occupant. The final step of the exercise is a giant bonfire, in which all the constructions go up in smoke. The students' faces betray mixed feelings as they see their personal creations destroyed, but the viewer is made to understand that the bonfire marks the beginning of something, rather than the end. The film, because of its emphasis on people and the nature of creative activity, has vitality. The students' comments are real and spontaneous; the viewer identifies with them and with their exciting and challenging project.

HRAW

1970

16 minutes

color



## Utilization

The Rebels/279 shows that a dedicated teacher can exercise tremendous influence in an indirect manner by taking his students out of the classroom and into a situation where they are simply living as people. The film could be used to stimulate discussion about the relation of manmade structures to the environment. The various modules constructed might be studied in relation to one another, and individually as reflections of each student's preferences and ideas. In essence, the underlying message of the film seems to be: "Stick your neck out--commit yourself--get involved and say 'This is what I mean'." Each student in the film found himself in a position where he had to produce; this in itself is a powerful stimulus to creative action.

## Questions

1. Were the structures produced by the class in harmony with the environment?
2. Were they in harmony with one another? If so, what made them that way?
3. What functions did these "buildings" serve? How did this influence their construction?
4. Why was it decided to go out into the country and actualize models and plans? What further experience was gained through this experience?
5. What should be the aim of the architect today?
6. What was the significance of the bonfire at the end of the film?
7. What things did you learn about the nature of creativity from the film?

Related Films

People Who Make Things

Point of View

Reflections in Space

Produced in 1970, after the first moon landing, Reflections in Space

attempts to express the impact of space exploration upon the arts.

The film is an ambitious attempt which features dancer Edward Villella, painter James Wyeth, poet Archibald MacLeish, William F. Buckley, Arthur

C. Clarke, and J. Carter Brown, as well as scenes from the feature film

2001: A Space Odyssey. The head of NASA likens man's emergence into

the space age to the emergence of the first life from the sea. With

the decade of the '70s man has become a creature of the universe, scarcely

able to comprehend his new position. It is the concern of scientists

and artists to comprehend and interpret this, and space exploration is

forging new links between science and the arts. An exhibition sponsored

by NASA features paintings which are, in fact, reflections in space.

Villella compares the 1929 ballet "Apollo" with the flight of Apollo

and the Eagle landing, and interprets the motions of the space walk from

a dancer's point of view. A sequence from 2001 depicts the journey

beyond infinity and a reading by Archibald MacLeish provides the con-

clusion. Technically the film is well done. It combines flash-frame

sequences of moon launches with live footage. The static (i.e., graphic) representations of the historic event are perhaps the most disappointing.

The actual photographs have more vitality than the artists' interpreta-

tions. There is not a successful reconciliation of art and technology

here. Perhaps contemporary artists who are involved in the use of sound

as a four-dimensional experience, or the creation of light sculpture or

holograms, or computer graphics, are closer to forging a link between art and science than painters who are still attempting a literal rendering of a visual image.

SCRESC

1970

27 minutes

color

#### Utilization

Since it embraces a number of curriculum areas such as dance, literature, science, journalism, cinematography, and art, this is a useful film for bridging the gap between disciplines. It provides insights into the artistic process for science majors, and may initiate discussion about art and technology.

#### Questions

1. Do you agree that great works of art have always accompanied significant historical events? What examples can you cite?
2. Which of the artistic interpretations of the Apollo flight do you consider to be the most successful, and why?
3. Can you project some ideas about the nature of art in the next century? The nature of the educational process? Science and technology?

#### Related Films

Art: What Is It? Why Is It?

Experiments in Motion Graphics

Powers of Ten

This Is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Message

Time Is

Why Man Creates

Richard Hunt--Sculptor

This film traces the personal influences which helped the young sculptor to develop, and it traces them in such a manner that teenagers will identify with him and his progress. It is an unpretentious film, and technically mediocre, but the artist is portrayed as an individual with a strong sense of identity and personal direction. Of particular importance is his relationship with one of his first teachers, Nellie Barr. Of her he says, "She had the ability as a teacher to make people feel they could do things that maybe they were afraid to do. I came to see some of her soul, I guess, in the way it expressed itself in her work and in her personality, and that's always helpful." Hunt is shown selecting pieces of scrap metal and junk which he takes to his studio, a converted basement. Welding plays a significant part in his work. His large symbolic-figurative sculpture of John Jones, commissioned by the University of Illinois, symbolizes the struggle of black people to attain their rightful place in America. More recently, large public commissions have given him the opportunity to design large scale works. Concerning his work in an industrial plant, he says, "Working in an industrial plant brings me more into contact with the reality of technology, conceiving and designing things that can be fabricated with industrial methods. In contrast to my earlier work, a different kind of creative thought process is involved. The environment for this kind of sculpture is an important consideration." Hunt is seen to be an artist who utilizes the resources of an urban environment to enrich

his work, and whose work, in turn, enriches the environment. This film is a simple but informative presentation of his self-realization as an artist and his choice of materials. It is, however, a little light on correlating his background to the final forms of his art. It would be helpful to be able to trace more fully the artistic influences on Hunt's work.

EBEC

1970

14 minutes

color

#### Utilization

Richard Hunt--Sculptor will be useful for junior and senior high school classes in sculpture. As a motivator, it shows that perseverance and hard work are necessary to achieve one's goals; in fact, this kind of determination often begins early, as it did in the case of Richard Hunt. Richard Hunt--Sculptor may be used with other films dealing with the art of found objects to explore the possibilities inherent in this method of working. It may also be useful to compare Hunt's philosophy with that of other artists such as Robert Gilbert (The Magic Machines), Edward Kienholz, and Jacques Lipchitz.

#### Questions

1. How does Hunt use found objects in his sculpture?
2. What kinds of found materials are available in your neighborhood?
3. Why do most great artists seem to draw most on their personal environment, childhood, intimate associations, etc.?
4. Recently, filmmakers have made use of found material. In what ways do Scott Bartlett and Bruce Baillie use "second-hand" newsreel footage and television?

5. Can art be used to improve or transform a city? How? Can you cite examples where this has been done?

Related Films

Kienholz on Exhibit

The Magic Machines

The Towers

This Is Ben Shahn

The Lithuanian-born immigrant tells of his development as an artist from his days as a student at the National Academy of Design and his acceptance of its aesthetic, until the age of twenty-six when he began to feel that emotional involvement and the storytelling element in art should be of primary importance in his work. His experiences of the Depression, his work with the Office of War Information, and the era of Reconstruction reaffirmed this conviction. His subject matter dealt increasingly with the aloneness of the individual, the impossibility of meaningful communication between men, and the efforts of man to persevere and overcome in the face of disaster and alienation. Examples of Shahn's work are shown: paintings, his Alphabet of Creation, covers for Time magazine, murals, mosaics, and stained glass windows. The artist emphasizes the need to explore new territory. This for him means experimenting with new media and keeping his mind open to all possibilities. When young artists seek his advice, he tells them: "We do what we want to do. Little decisions add up to a direction." The overall impression imparted by the artist is that of a warm, wise human being who encourages all men to seek their own freedom and truth, and whose philosophy may be summed up in the words "Know, Love, Remember."

BFA

1968

17 minutes

color

Utilization

This Is Ben Shahn provides an interesting introduction to the ideas and works of the artist. His comments are informal and to the point, and combine insights into his personality with his ideas about art, religion,



and the nature of man. More examples of his work could have been included, but this lack can always be supplemented by slides or reproductions. The film does not really show the artist at work, and some may consider this a weakness, but from his comments one gains an impression of the way Shahn works, and the stages in his development. This Is Ben Shahn will be useful in a consideration of the creative process and in a comparative study of contemporary artists. Shahn's ideas about the commonly-made distinction between "fine" art and commercial art are provocative and will generate discussion about the role of the graphic arts in this age of mass communication. His preoccupation with communication extends to the use of letters and whole texts in his work. His use of such material may be compared with the pop artists, Jasper Johns, and medieval illuminated manuscripts.

#### Questions

1. Why did Shahn reject the National Academy of Design aesthetic at the age of twenty-six?
2. How would you describe his aesthetic since that time?
3. What are Shahn's views on "fine" art and commercial art? Are these views compatible with today's culture?
4. How does Shahn relate to the mass communications? What is the significance of the written word as it is incorporated into his graphics?

#### Related Films

Keinholz on Exhibit

This Is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Message

The Wyeth Phenomenon

### The Towers

On the outskirts of Los Angeles, in a little town composed largely of trailers, shacks, and little houses, may be seen the creations of Italian-born Simon Rodilla, a tile setter. Using the debris of the busy civilization which he shunned, Rodilla constructed tall towers reminiscent of the bell towers and Gothic cathedrals of Italy, all seeming to typify man's aspirations for immortality. He used steel girders, wire mesh, concrete, basic tools and his own two hands, and decorated his constructions with old fragments of glass, china, and metal, to create mosaic-like patterns. His works are signed with the imprint of his tools and the initials "S. R." He liked to think of the great builders and explorers like Galileo, Columbus, Michelangelo, and these towers were his ambitious attempt to "create something big" himself. The comments of the townspeople as they are heard in this film are amusing and show varying degrees of insight, tolerance, or bewilderment. Interspersed with their observations are those of Rodilla himself.

RFL

1960

13 minutes

color

#### Utilization

The film explores the nature of the artistic impulse, how it operates independent of the world around, and seeks only to satisfy its own stringent requirements. To do this, it shows the life of one artist-craftsman, how he worked, and why. The Towers will be useful in art appreciation classes to show that art is not limited to galleries and museums. In art history classes it might be compared with the film

Antonio Gaudi. For studio classes, it might introduce mosaic or tile work, or art projects involving found objects. Since the technical quality of the film is not exceptional, it might be wise to supplement it with slides of Rodilla's towers.

#### Questions

1. Why did Simon Rodilla construct his towers?
2. What similarities are there between his work and that of Antonio Gaudi?
3. What significance is there in the fact that Rodilla used discarded objects and transformed them into works of art?
4. Compare Rodilla's constructions with the sculpture of other artists who use discarded objects, for example Richard Hunt and Edward Kienholz.

#### Related Films

Antonio Gaudi

The Magic Machines

The Rebels/279: Ecology of Design

Why Man Creates

Who Is: Victor Vasarely

This is a thought-provoking encounter with the revolutionary Hungarian-born artist who contends that the art of the past is dead and finished and that art must change radically to survive in the age of technology. Vasarely believes that the truths of our time are represented by relativity, the speed of light, and the weight of an atom. To this end he has gone from representational abstraction, through kinetic experiment, to what he terms an "abstract geometric alphabet." Some of his ideas include the development of a "science of painting," teams of scientific investigators who will be the creators of the future, and the evolution of a "perfect creative machine." Vasarely observes that "the artist of today will no longer paint a green leaf on a tree; he will be wondering where chlorophyll comes from." He talks about his constant battle with the figurative image which appears and reappears from the depths of his subconscious. What is needed, he says, is a "new plastic language which starts at zero." Using an alphabet of colored geometric shapes and numbered charts for colors, he is able to arrive at infinite permutations of these elements. His designs are executed by assistants, and he makes correction charts which they use to make revisions on the paintings. Part of Vasarely's "manifesto" insists that the art market is an outdated system, that it has removed art from the man in the street and made it the property of a small elite. He advocates mass reproduction of artists' works, prototypes which can be multiplied and integrated into every aspect of modern life. He foresees a time when his works (which he calls "planetary folklore," having both

personal and universal significance) will be programmed for the computer.

Who Is: Victor Vasarely is an exciting visual experience, whether or not one agrees with the radical ideas of Vasarely, which are both stimulating and frightening to many people. The technical quality of the film is excellent.

IU

1968

30 minutes

color

#### Utilization

The film is guaranteed to generate discussion about the following issues: the role of the artist in an age of technology, and Vasarely's relationship to op art and to kinetic art. It makes an excellent accompaniment to a study of the artist's work, or to a consideration of twentieth century art movements in general.

#### Questions

1. Do you agree with Vasarely that it is the scientists who will dominate the art world in the future? Why?
2. Does Vasarely's "planetary folklore" succeed? Is his work both personal and universal?
3. Why does Vasarely fight against the figurative image?
4. What does he mean when he says, "The artist of today will no longer paint a green leaf on a tree; he will be wondering where chlorophyll comes from"? Is this true, or will the romantic, personal vision of life always be a part of the mainstream of the arts?
5. Are Vasarely's ideas echoed in the other arts? What comparisons can be drawn between Vasarely and composer John Cage? What about the art of the motion picture?

6. What does Vasarely's work say to us about craftsmanship?

Related Films

Experiments in Motion Graphics

The Expanding Universe of Sculpture

Art for Tomorrow

The Wyeth Phenomenon

In this CBS News Special, Harry Reasoner takes a look at three generations of Wyeths, with their similar styles, attitudes, and preoccupations. Included are the comments of the painters, those who know them personally, their critics, and the public. The film opens with Andrew Wyeth's painting entitled "Christina's World" and moves to an exhibition of his works, and the reactions of gallery-goers. Some say Wyeth is too much of a realist, is not a twentieth-century artist; others accuse him of drawing the American public away from an appreciation of the avant-garde. But most are enthusiastic. John Canaday explains his popularity as stemming from his attitude that life is worthwhile, human relationships are important, nature is beautiful. But Canaday also stresses that Wyeth's world is not sentimental; his is a world of traditional values, a simpler and truer world, and society today is afraid of sincere expressed emotion. Wyeth's sister, Mrs. Peter Hurd, speaking of his paintings, says they "nourish" America. An interesting aspect of Wyeth's work is the feeling it conveys of capturing the passing moment, of isolating human experience. Canaday says that by isolating and abstracting what he sees, Wyeth allows the viewer to re-experience something which he once knew or wishes he had known. He describes the loneliness which is often perceived in Wyeth's paintings as the "loneliness of the species," not the loneliness of the schizophrenic or the rebel. In addition to depicting the countryside which has provided inspiration for the painter, the film provides shots of a number of his paintings. The viewer is introduced to the work of Andrew's father,

N. C. Wyeth, famous illustrator of children's classics who had a profound influence on his son, and to Andrew's son Jamie, the third generation Wyeth painter whose style and general outlook seem very close to that of his father. The Wyeth Phenomenon is a perceptive and well-edited documentary.

BFA

1968

26 minutes

color

#### Utilization

This film will serve as an excellent introduction to a study of Wyeth's work and to the art of realism in general. It provides background on the artist which would be difficult to obtain in any other way. Although it is not a provocative film in the sense of being controversial, it will generate discussion about the relevance of figurative painting, especially the "photographic" type of realism produced by Wyeth, in this age of the camera and other technological inventions. It may also encourage discussion of the role of values in art.

#### Questions

1. Does Andrew Wyeth accomplish anything that a skilled photographer cannot?
2. What kinds of feelings are conveyed by his paintings?
3. Compare Wyeth's work with that of Alex Colville. What are the similarities? Differences?
4. What is Wyeth saying about the 20th century? What are his views on the interrelatedness of life and art?
5. Compare Wyeth and his works with the following: Rembrandt; Andy Warhol; Edward Weston; Victor Vasarely.



Related Films

Abstraction

Buddhism, Man, and Nature

Meaning in Modern Painting: Parts I and II

The Worship of Nature

## CHAPTER IV

### FILM: THE NEW ART

Films play an enormously important role in today's cultural life. Almost everyone goes to the movies at least occasionally, and sees movies as part of the common fare of television programming. The popularity, availability, and consequent influence of film is readily seen when compared to that of the museum or gallery, where attendance is generally limited to the connoisseur or the interested student. In addition to the universal availability of film, one might find its pervasive influence to rest in the fact that it is a popular medium. To many people the motion picture is not really art.

The popularity of this medium, however, may have its disadvantages. The authors of Need Johnny Read? comment: "The same people who honestly admit 'I don't know much about fine art, but I know what I like' will not be equally honest with film because it is a popular art form. They presume to measure and evaluate film by standards inappropriate to the medium. As a result, they often miss the essence of the art experience."<sup>14</sup> There is, then, a need for more than simple exposure to films. Since the film's popularity may make it a more pervasive influence than the traditional art forms, educators have a compelling reason to evaluate and to explore its form.

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<sup>14</sup>Goldman and Burnett, p. 155.

Bela Balázs was one of the first critics to recognize the importance of film education. In Theory of the Film, he says, "A man who had never heard of Beethoven or Michelangelo would be out of place among people of culture. But if he had not the faintest idea of the rudiments of film art and had never heard of Asta Nielsen or David Wark Griffith he might still pass for a well-educated, cultured person, even on the highest level."<sup>15</sup> Today, it seems less feasible that a man can be truly educated and still have only a cursory knowledge of the art form of our time. This is especially true for Canadians and Americans, for the McLaren's and the Griffiths are truly among the most representative and influential of our artists.

But leaving aside the question of the education of the cultured man, we still find justification for film study on the simple grounds of visual literacy. In this respect, Sister Bede Sullivan's statistics are significant. She observes that "the average high school graduate today has watched more than 15,000 hours of television and more than 500 films, as contrasted with 10,800 hours spent in formal classroom study."<sup>16</sup> And the ratio of books read to films seen is even more demonstrative; the high school student reads one book for every seven films he watches.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>15</sup>Balázs, p. 18.

<sup>16</sup>Sister Bede Sullivan, Movies: Universal Language, Dome Books (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, Inc., 1970), p. xi.

<sup>17</sup>ibid.

In short, educators may continue to expose students to film, but they must provoke more than an "I know what I like" response. Certainly, the opportunity is there, for today's students are, to echo Stanley Kauffman, the "film generation." And film is "the art for which there is the greatest spontaneous appetite in America at present."<sup>18</sup>

If this is the case, the schools should capitalize on this interest to make the learning process rich and meaningful. But in order to do this, as indicated before, there is need for some kind of film study, however informal. Film study at the secondary level need not be exhaustive or overly academic. Neither does it require a teacher with a graduate degree in film. A teacher with an enthusiastic interest in film and one who can communicate with students and channel discussion will often do the better job. In fact, John Stuart Katz suggests that the film teacher's role should be "collaborative rather than coercive."<sup>19</sup>

In "Interaction and Film Study," Katz also suggests three ways in which the teaching of film may be approached. It may be presented as a "subject," like English or history; it may be taught from an interdisciplinary perspective, transcending traditional bounds, or it may be employed as a means to interaction and, hopefully, as a humanizing element in the educational process.<sup>20</sup> It is this latter view which Katz prefers. This "interaction" of which he speaks is any experience

<sup>18</sup> Stanley Kauffman, A World on Film: Criticism and Comment, Delta Books (New York: Dell Publishing Company, Inc., 1966), p. 415.

<sup>19</sup> John Stuart Katz, "Interaction and Film Study," in Perspectives on the Study of Film, ed. by John Stuart Katz (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971), p. 285.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 280.

which results in new learning, whether it is an exchange between individuals, or between individuals and objects, or between the ideas and thoughts of any one person. The humanities approach popular in many high schools today reflects this view.

The film course which is approached from an historical perspective has limitations in a high school setting. For instance, it locks the teacher into a time sequence, which may mean he is prevented from making comparisons and showing development of a particular style or theme. It also means that he is obliged to use some full-length features, which may be difficult and expensive to obtain. Features have the added disadvantage of taking up to three class sessions; consequently, the teacher may have difficulty sustaining student attention and interest. Thus, the historical approach might best be utilized by teachers who can establish film clubs, which could meet outside of regularly scheduled classes. This approach, then, might be a supplemental one. The teacher might, however, occasionally punctuate a critically oriented film class by utilizing films from the History of the Motion Picture series or a film such as First Flickers.

The interdisciplinary approach to film study has great value and appeal, and there are films which lend themselves to this method, such as the Humanities series produced by Encyclopaedia Britannica Educational Corporation and McGraw-Hill. These films tend to relate the arts (and occasionally the sciences) to the history of ideas and politics, and as such they are valuable. Sir Kenneth Clark's Civilisation series is another example of such an approach. But however valuable these

materials may be, they do not in themselves constitute a course in film study. In fact, they rarely qualify as exceptional films, for the content usually takes precedence over style and format. In an interdisciplinary program, which may touch on and relate three or more curricular areas, this is even more likely. The teacher, too, will be required to spend more time channelling discussion of the ideas expressed in a particular film than of the techniques which are the vehicles of those ideas. And so, especially for the art teacher who is concerned with communicating basic ideas and facts about film, such an approach will be too broad, in one sense, and, in another sense, lacking in depth.

Perhaps it is necessary at this point to draw a distinction between the terms "humanities," as it is used above, and "humanizing," as it relates to Katz's idea of interaction. Interaction, according to Katz, involves operative knowing--"the active transforming or structuring of experience into practical or theoretical knowledge."<sup>21</sup> This kind of conceptual-integration contributes to the humanity of the individual, and according to Katz, film has great potential for the expansion of operative learning.

It is this interactive or humanizing approach to film study which Katz advocates, one which allows for analysis of film techniques and the language of film. A film which constitutes an experience for the viewer also demands some degree of understanding of how the experience

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<sup>21</sup> ibid., p. 281.

came about. Films such as Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary and Understanding Movies are tools to help the student make the most of his film experience. Other films, such as Cry of the Marsh, Film, and Allures, actually are experiences.

Each teacher will find his own approach to the teaching of film, which will depend to some extent on his background and to some extent on that of his students. One teacher has found it particularly useful to deal with films loosely in the categories of fact, fiction, and fantasy.<sup>22</sup> Films of fact are for the most part documentaries; films of fiction usually involve a storyline and actors and may be based on a novel, play, or short story; and films of fantasy are often animated or surreal in format. Any of these groups may be studied from an historical viewpoint, or by means of a comparison of techniques and styles. This approach also allows for extensive use of short films.

As for the filmmaking approach to film study at the secondary level, it is expensive and time consuming. It also requires an experienced instructor. Many universities, however, offer extensive filmmaking programs, and some grant degrees in filmmaking. There are also numerous university and community sponsored workshops which provide intensive short-term exposure to the medium. An alternative to 8mm or 16mm film production is video. More and more schools are acquiring both recording and playback equipment, and a number of experimental projects have

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<sup>22</sup>Cecile Starr Boyajian, "Notes on the Teaching of Film as an Art," Film News, XXVII (October, 1970), pp. 12-13, 25.

been successfully carried out with high school students.<sup>23</sup>

The films in this chapter have been selected primarily to provide an approach to understanding and appreciating the film medium. No attempt has been made to provide an exhaustive "film as art" listing, but a selected number of fine documentaries, animated films, and dramatic pieces have been included. In addition, a number of films listed in preceding chapters are rich in material for film study. Where this is the case, it has been so noted.

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<sup>23</sup> For example, see Rehana Hamid's "To Help a Teenager Get In Touch" and Mary A. Brown's "Teen-age Videotape Workshop," Film Library Quarterly, V (Summer, 1972), pp. 14-21.



Allures

Jordan Belson, West Coast artist who at one time produced animated scroll paintings and at another time was involved in light shows for the famous Vortex Concerts held at the Morrison Planetarium at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, was influenced by the films of the Whitneys. Since the Vortex Concerts used up to seventy projectors at one time, as well as designs on rotating slides, patterns which covered the dome of the planetarium, and stroboscopic effects, it is likely that this too had an influence on the films he has produced. Belson's early films made use of stop-motion techniques, but more recently he has used continuous action and the manipulation of light to achieve effects such as those seen in Allures. Belson's films are carefully controlled and often take him years to complete. They usually deal with themes such as cosmogenesis (Allures is an example), reincarnation, meditation, and psychedelic experience. Some other films produced by Belson are entitled Cosmos, Raga, World, and Re-entry. Since 1960 Belson has also composed his own sound tracks. He says of his films that they are "not to be seen, but to be experienced. . . not as creations, but as recognitions." Until quite recently, it was difficult to view Belson's works, since he refused to allow them to be shown unless he could control both the conditions of viewing and the audience. Allures is a visual trip into the center of the universe, where worlds take form in response to some strange rhythm and the viewer is ultimately transported to a state which can only be described as a kind of Nirvana.

PFP

1960

8 minutes

color

### Utilization

Belson, like McLaren, links the image and soundtrack in his films so that one is as important as the other. Allures should be studied carefully from this point of view. Allures may be compared with other films in this listing dealing with time, space, and the universe, such as McLaren's Spheres, and with the films of the Whitneys. His films may be compared with computer-generated productions, to try to pin down the differences in terms of technique and emotional impact. Students who wish to learn more about Belson, a legendary figure in the underground movement, may be referred to An Introduction to the American Underground Film, Dutton, 1967.

### Questions

1. What photographic techniques are employed by Belson in Allures?
2. Comment on the soundtrack. Does it adequately interpret the images on the screen?
3. What is the theme of Allures? How would you describe its imagery?
4. Compare Allures with Permutations in regard to the treatment of three-dimensional space and the use of a musical score.
5. Compare Whitney's computer-animated evolving shapes with Belson's.

### Related Films

Cosmic Zoom

Permutations (Experiments in Motion Graphics)

Powers of Ten

Spheres

Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary

One of the first films to be produced primarily for the teaching of film technique and film appreciation, this "visual dictionary" is the work of Sheldon Renan, author of An Introduction to the American Underground Film. The film provides illustrations and demonstrations of the basic shots and procedures involved in making a film, from the original idea and preparation of the script, to the final editing. Three young people demonstrate the basic shots, lenses, and camera movements, while pretending that they are actually making a film. The result is a brief, convincing, and humorous teaching tool which stands up to more than one viewing. The film medium is an ideal way to convey the basic terms, since it allows for demonstration rather than mere description. The film was tested with both students and teachers during production.

PPF

1970

15 minutes

color

Utilization

The director of Basic Film Terms suggests that the film be shown on the first day of a film course so that the instructor and students have a common vocabulary for discussion. Alternatively, the instructor may prefer to wait for a couple of weeks, until students have been exposed to a number of films in a non-critical manner and have developed both awareness of the medium and curiosity about the techniques employed. The film will usually need to be shown more than once. The projector may be stopped at intervals for discussion. Beginning classes in film-making will find this a useful film.

## Questions

1. Outline the steps in making a film, as they are presented in this film.
2. Is a script necessary? What function can it serve? Suggest an idea for a film and work up a rough script.
3. Name three ways of making a transition between scenes.
4. What is a zoom lens used for?
5. What is a pan? a dolly?

## Related Films

The Cinematographer

The Movie Makers

Understanding Movies

The Beginning of Life

This film treatment of Lennart Nilsson's seven-year project provides photographic documentation of the stages in the growth of the human embryo inside the womb, from the fetal stages of cellular growth up to the moment when a new person is propelled into the world. In doing so, it captures the mysterious and awesome qualities of human development. An unusual musical score by Karl Briger Blomdahl accompanies the narration and adds to the dramatic build-up of tension before the actual birth. Photographs are those featured in a 1969 issue of Life magazine and subsequently published in book form. The film ends with a live delivery sequence.

BNCHMK

1969

30 minutes

color

## Utilization

Although this film will be of particular interest to students of photography, it is a startling and rather beautiful exploration of the mystery of life and growth, as well as a successful piece of film art.

## Questions

1. What techniques were employed in the creation of this film? How do they contribute to the build-up of momentum and tension?
2. What is the significance of the live sequence at the end?
3. What does Beginning of Life say to you about the nature of life?

## Related Films

Clay (Origin of the Species)La JetéeThis Is Ben Shahn

Clay (Origin of the Species)

This experimental film was produced by Derek Lamb at the Carpenter Center of the Visual Arts at Harvard. Perhaps the most striking aspect of Clay is the absence of any master hand, human or otherwise, at work. The action is performed by a lump of clay which molds itself into one fantastic shape after another, to the accompaniment of an improvised jazz score. A little blob of clay inches its way across the screen, followed by a larger blob. It begins to mold itself into animal-like shapes, progressing from fish to bird, to elephant and primate, and finally to man himself. Whether this metamorphosis is an accurate interpretation of Darwin is open to question, but regardless of its questionable scientific accuracy, Clay has established itself as a classic example of animation technique and a masterpiece of film wit.

MGHT                      1965                      8 minutes                      color

## Utilization.

Clay is a film with wide general appeal; audiences of all ages find it entertaining, and students of animation will view it again and again in order to observe its subtleties. One of its most striking elements is its playful experimentation. None of the evolving beasts is allowed to progress to the finished or polished stage of "sculpture." For this reason, Clay will be useful in studio classes to set up a climate of enjoyment of the medium. A similar film was produced by one of Lamb's students: Caroline Leaf used sand to create a charming variation on the "Peter and the Wolf" fable. The film, titled Sand (Or Peter and

the Wolf) was released in 1969, and invites favorable comparison with Clay (Origin of the Species).

#### Questions

1. What is the significance of the film's subtitle as related to the images?
2. What type of photography is used to capture the development of the forms?
3. What is the film's general tone? How does the musical score help to establish the tone?
4. How does the improvisational nature of the jazz score echo the metamorphosis of the figures?
5. What animals could you identify? Did there seem to be a progression which one could equate with Darwin's theory of evolution?
6. Can you recall a sequence where shadows are used to emphasize the three-dimensional quality of the forms?

#### Related Films

A Chaïry Tale

Leaf

The Magic World of Karel Zeman

Why Man Creates

Experiments In Motion Graphics

Filmmaker John Whitney, under a grant from IBM, takes part in a research program in computer graphics. As brightly colored patterns move across the screen, Whitney tells how they are created. A camera using black and white motion picture film automatically records signals generated from the computer program. Whitney later recopies the black and white images onto color film with an optical printer, using color filters and superimposition. Whitney admits that there are problems associated with these "designs in motion." For example, he gets no instant feedback on his images. He foresees a time, however, when computers will arrive at "real" time. He compares computer graphics with movements such as op art, where color has value for its own sake. But, he says, motion graphics also has to contend with time and motion, problems unique to the medium. He admits that he has no firm color aesthetic at present, and admits too that the creation of motion graphics tends to remain an intellectual exercise; emotional involvement with a computer is not easy. Here again, part of the problem lies with "real" time. The artist has to wait to see what he is producing; computers are still too big and too expensive to take home over the weekend. Whitney sees sound as a partner to the images--in fact, he suggests that it may supply the needed emotional impact--but he does not want his images to be subject to the sound. He compares motion graphics to music (counterpoint, polyphony) and to linguistics. In his analysis of his short film Permutations (included in the Experiments),



he calls it a compositional language in which he realized a hierarchy of components. He concludes by refuting the popular notion that computer art will prove to be a labor-saving device for the artist, or replace the artist. He foresees a time when the art of motion graphics will be a part of daily television programming.

PFP                      1970                      15 minutes                      color

#### Utilization

Experiments in Motion Graphics will be especially useful for courses in film study. In addition to Whitney's comments on computer graphics, the short film Permutations is included in the presentation. It will also be of interest to interdisciplinary programs involving the arts and sciences, and might be used in conjunction with a film such as Reflections In Space. Although Whitney's theories and observations are not easy to follow, the film provides an important orientation to the art of computer graphics. It also introduces the viewer to a contemporary artist who is attempting to reconcile art and technology (to "humanize technology") in a new medium.

#### Questions

1. Are Whitney's attempts to "humanize technology" successful? If so, why, and if not, why not?
2. What is the difference between "real" time and computer time? Why would this difference pose a problem to the artist involved with motion graphics?

Related Films

The Expanding Universe of Sculpture

Reflections in Space

Who Is: Victor Vasarely

The Eye Hears, the Ear Sees

Conversations with Canadian animator Norman McLaren are combined with excerpts of many of his films to create a warm portrait of a sensitive artist and to trace the development of the innovative techniques employed by him over the past thirty years. He talks about his life, from his days in a Glasgow art school to his initial contact with the National Film Board of Canada. His interest in human problems, as seen in his early film entitled Neighbors, co-exists with an interest in abstraction and its forms. All McLaren's films display an unerring sensitivity to music. A recently-released film, Spheres, was made in the '50s but the filmmaker admits that it was not until 1969 that he felt justified in using a Bach score to accompany it. Possible future directions are observed in test sequences made for Pas de Deux, a lyrical ballet film using multiple images and time-lapse photography. In Striations (1969-70), the sound goes right across the film and becomes both the image and the soundtrack. McLaren is seen composing the music on the piano, then photographing the sound directly on film. In this way, with the sound and picture becoming one, it may truly be said that "the eye hears, the ear sees." The film was originally produced for television by the BBC, with the cooperation of the National Film Board of Canada, and it has the slight graininess of the kinescope. For some teenagers, it may be too long, but for those with an interest in the filmmaker or the art of animation, it will be of great value.

NFBC

1970

59 minutes

color

### Utilization

The Eye Hears, The Ear Sees is a valuable document of an artist's development which will be used successfully in both film study and film appreciation classes. It may be supplemented by an earlier film entitled Window on Canada: An Interview with Norman McLaren. The film is also useful for a study of a creative personality.

### Questions

1. What does the title of this film mean?
2. What are McLaren's major preoccupations? Would you say that he has a personal vision which manifests itself in his films? How would you describe it?
3. What does this film have to say about the creative process?

### Related Films

Experiments in Motion Graphics

The Magic World of Karel Zeman

Window on Canada: An Interview with Norman McLaren

Film

Samuel Beckett wrote the screenplay for this unusual film, and Buster Keaton plays an old man who for some reason cannot bear to be observed. In addition to depicting an amusing and sometimes frightening interplay between the individual and the camera, Film is a subtle psychological and perceptual study in which the point of view varies from the objectivity of the camera eye to the blurred and distorted vision of the old man. The title in itself is ambiguous: does it refer to the filmed action, or to the old man's blurry vision, or to the limits of human perception in general? With the exception of a loud whispered "Shhhhh" in the opening scene, the film is silent. The settings, too, are limited, and most of the action takes place within the old man's room. The old man, who cannot bear to have another pair of eyes on him, first covers the windows and a mirror on the wall, then removes both his cat and dog. He covers a birdcage and a fishbowl to avoid the eyes of bird and fish, and finally rips a portrait from the wall. When he is assured that no one is watching, not even his reflection in the mirror, he sits down in an old rocker. Ironically, the chair's back is carved so that the viewer is reminded of a face with cut-out eyes through which the light gleams, but the old man is oblivious of this resemblance, and so the chair remains. Pulling out a packet of family photographs, he begins to look through them, but even here the eyes look out at him, and he rips the photographs to pieces. With his eyes closed, the old man rocks in his chair, only to find upon opening them again that he is staring

Into the lens of the camera, which has moved 180 degrees from a position behind his chair to one directly before him. Film is open to numerous interpretations. It raises questions about the relationship of man to his environment, about the psychology of perception, and about the film making process.

GROFL

1969

22 minutes

b&amp;w

### Utilization

Film is a sophisticated exploration of perception which demands considerable participation on the part of the viewer. For this reason, it may pose too many problems for students who lack experience in analyzing film. For somewhat advanced classes, it will be a useful and interesting addition to interdisciplinary and humanities courses, visual perception and film study.

### Questions

1. Discuss point of view as it relates to Film. Is there more than one point of view?
2. What kinds of camera movement did you observe?
3. Discuss the eye symbolism used throughout.
4. Why do you think the film is silent, with the exception of the "Shhhhhh" in the first scene?
5. From what you know of Samuel Beckett, what would you say about the philosophical stance of the film?
6. From what you know of Buster Keaton, how does he fit into a film of this nature?

Related Films

A Chairy Tale

The Eyes Have It. . . Or Do They?

To See Or Not to See

Very Nice, Very Nice

### First Flickers

First Flickers, produced by NBC with the cooperation of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institute, will be of interest to students of motion picture history. It deals with the large number of films produced before 1912 which were believed lost or destroyed, but which were subsequently discovered in the paper print collection of the Library of Congress. Until 1912, the only way to register a motion picture with the Library of Congress was on paper. The process of converting these paper films back to regular stock was difficult and took over a decade to complete. First Flickers contains excerpts, and in some cases the full footage, of many of these very early works, beginning with Edison's The Sneeze and ranging from Melies' Kingdom of the Fairies, to footage shown at night at the Pan American Exposition in 1901, to Porter's Life of an American Fireman. An interesting sequence compares his Great Train Robbery with a plagiarized version done several years later by Lubin. Examples of other early films shown in First Flickers are Rescued by Rover (Cecil Hepworth) and An Arcadian Maiden (Griffith). First Flickers is entertaining and informative and the quality of the paper prints is surprisingly good. They are projected at the speed at which they were originally photographed rather than on standard modern equipment. The result is that instead of appearing jerky and speeded up, these excerpts appear normal to the audience. The only major flaw in the film occurs at the beginning, where a filmograph of early motion picture projectors appears without any identification or explanation, and where the only accompaniment is snatches of



music from popular feature films. This sequence serves no educational or aesthetic purpose.

NBC 1972 30 minutes color

Utilization

First Flickers will be useful in a study of motion picture history, where students have some general background so that they will be able to see the paper films in their proper context. However, the film can stand alone, and has considerable entertainment value.

Questions

1. How did these early films survive?
2. What is a paper print? What is the procedure for converting paper prints to regular film stock?
3. What were the qualities that people looked for in the first films?  
Is movement still the most important feature of motion pictures?
4. What was the significance of Porter's Great Train Robbery in the development of American films?

Related Films

America (History of the Motion Picture series)

Film Firsts

The Movie Makers

William S. Hart (History of the Motion Picture series)

The History of the Motion Picture series

This popular series provides excerpts from famous early motion pictures, along with a commentary which provides historical background and insights into the techniques and innovations depicted. The major advantage of the series is that it introduces students to major classics in edited form with a helpful commentary which does not become too technical or lengthy so that the films do not lose their appeal as entertainment.

Some of the films, such as The Clown Princes, Sad Clowns, and Slapstick combine the performances of a number of comedians and show how their styles and personalities differed. Film Firsts surveys the ideas and techniques of the great film pioneers up to the first talkies. Each film runs less than thirty minutes, which facilitates classroom use.

Titles of the motion pictures included in the series are as follows:

America  
The Americano  
Black Pirate  
Blood and Sand  
The Clown Princes  
Don Juan  
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde  
Dracula  
The Eagle  
Fall of Babylon (Intolerance)  
Film Firsts: Parts I and II  
Fun Factory  
Garden of Eden  
The General  
Girls in Danger  
Headless Horseman  
Hunchback of Notre Dame  
Hoodoo Ann  
Keaton Special  
Lilac Time  
Old San Francisco  
Orphans of the Storm

Patent Leather Kid  
Rip Tin Tin  
Road to Yesterday  
Sad Clowns  
The Sea Beast  
Slapstick  
Son of the Sheik  
Story of the Serials  
Tempest  
Thief of Bagdad  
Variety  
Wild and Woolly  
Will Rogers  
William S. Hart  
Yankee Clipper

SF

25-27 minutes each

b&amp;w

#### Utilization

The films may be used individually in film study programs to illustrate a particular period, or they may be used in groups where the history of film is being studied.

Leaf

This David Adams production has been selected because of its simplicity of conception and the endless variety and complexity which is achieved within the limits of that simple framework. For a few brief moments, a golden leaf in Yosemite National Park becomes the focal point of the universe, and of the cycle of life and death. It is fall, and a lone leaf remains on a tree buffeted by the wind. Finally, the leaf releases its hold on the tree and, observed by birds and woodland creatures, begins its eventful last journey. It drifts and dances through the air, is carried by gusts over mountain peaks and down smooth rocky walls, into a rivulet where it glides slowly towards a stream. The final glimpse of the leaf shows it bleached almost white by sun and water, but moving like a stately ship towards harbor.

PFP

1962

7 minutes

color

## Utilization

Leaf is a useful addition to a film study course because it takes a simple occurrence in nature and turns it into a metaphoric journey, through the use of recorded movement, light, and sound. It demonstrates how the artist can take an insignificant happening and place it in a context which transforms it and gives it universal meaning and scale. Both the photography and soundtrack contribute to the significance of the film.

## Questions

1. Does Leaf have a narrative structure? How is this structure conveyed visually? What are the stages in the narrative?

2. By what means does the filmmaker transform the simple falling of a leaf into a cosmic event?
3. Discuss the symbolism in Leaf.
4. How are lighting and motion used? (For example, at one point we see pinpoints of light on the leaf as it floats downstream. The preceding shot of trees overhead with sunlight glancing through the foliage prepares us for this.)
5. Is there significance in the fact that the leaf appears at the top of the screen in the opening scenes, and at the bottom of the screen at the film's conclusion?
6. What examples of close-up and long shots do you recall from the film? Can you explain in each case why the filmmaker used these particular shots in preference to others?

#### Related Films

Art and Motion

The Art of Seeing

Cry of the Marsh

Mood of Zen

The Magic World of Karel Zeman

This delightful documentary captures the essence of fantastic art as seen in the special effects and animation of filmmaker Karel Zeman. Zeman has been called the successor to George Méliés, but although their approaches to fantasy are similar, Zeman has gone on to develop his own unique style and innovations which were unknown to Méliés. He is famous for his early cartoons (he invented Czechoslovakia's favorite cartoon character, Mr. Prokoup), and his later films combine live action, cartoons, models, and trick effects. Sequences from his feature films are included, such as Prehistoric Journey in which primeval beasts come to life and engage in battles, The Fabulous World of Jules Verne (The Invention of Destruction), and Baron Munchausen. The Magic World of Karel Zeman visits the filmmaker's studio, where the viewer is taken behind the scenes to see how many of Zeman's special effects were created, including the famous undersea battles between sea monsters, men, and submarines. Zeman is also seen on location working with actors and special effects. The film is well-organized and imparts a good deal of information, in addition to conveying a sense of delight and enjoyment. The musical score is effective.

MGHT                      1963                      17 minutes                      color

Utilization

The Magic World of Karel Zeman is a sensitive treatment of the filmmaker's personality and preoccupations. For this reason it will be useful for a study of contemporary artists and the creative process

(see Chapter Three). For film study courses, it compares the filmmaker with Méliés and places him in a tradition of fantastic art. It will also be useful for consideration of trick photography, animation, and special effects. The teacher can explore the power of the film medium to create illusion through selection of subject matter; in other words, what the camera selects and omits is often fundamental to creating a sense of reality. For example, because Zeman uses a fishbowl but only shows us the water and not the sides of the container, we believe that he is showing us the sea; and because the monster in the water moves, we are prepared to accept the idea that it is alive.

#### Questions

1. How did Zeman create his underwater scenes for The Fabulous World of Jules Verne?
2. How were the dinosaur scenes in Prehistoric Journey shot?
3. Using the two preceding films, discuss the importance of camera placement and camera angle in achieving special effects.

#### Related Films

Breathdeath

Calder's Circus

First Flickers

An Introduction to Visual Illusions

The Magic Machines

Mothlight

Among the underground filmmakers, Stan Brakhage has been the leader in the movement away from literature and surrealist psychodrama towards a personal and sense-oriented style. His intention is to challenge all traditional art forms, including the current popular cinema culture. This aim has led Brakhage through many experiments: he often uses a hand-held camera, paints or scratches directly on film, makes holes in it, or splices in mid-frame for the purpose of jolting the viewer. He has even grown mold on film in order to observe the ensuing patterns. In Mothlight, one of his shorter and more easily acquired films (and also one which is more acceptable to conservative audiences) Brakhage assembled moth wings and bits of leaves and flowers in a sort of collage, and placed them between mylar strips. The resulting film was then run through an optical printer. No camera was involved. The result is a flickering light collage which Brakhage describes as "what a moth might see from birth to death if black were white." Mothlight might be said to belong to Brakhage's "middle period." Later films, such as Fire of Waters (1965) and Black Vision (1965) deal with landscape, and involve distorting lenses, film painting and scratching, and camera movement.

PFP                      1963                      4 minutes                      silent                      color

## Utilization

Mothlight, along with Van der Beek's Breathdeath and Belson's Allures, are examples of the American underground film. An excellent introduction to this movement may be found in Sheldon Renan's An Introduction



to the American Underground Film, published in paperback by Dutton (in Canada by Clarke, Irwin and Company Limited). Mothlight is unique in that no camera was used in its production; it is essentially a collage. It invites comparison with Breathdeath, which utilizes collage techniques and animation, and with McLaren's early films in which he painted directly on film. Mothlight will be useful for discussion of the underground film in general, the attitudes of its filmmakers to traditional and commercial motion picture production, and the relation of film to the other arts.

#### Questions

1. What technique is employed in Mothlight?
2. Does it succeed? Why or why not?
3. The film is silent and should be projected at 16 frames per second. Does this slow down the progression of images sufficiently?
4. What does the film medium do with the subject matter that a regular collage might not be able to accomplish?

#### Related Films

Breathdeath

The Movie Makers

The Movie Makers, produced by Norwood Studios, gives a very brief history of the medium and a general introduction to motion picture production as it occurs in both the film and television industries. It begins with a paper film called "The Sneeze" (1893) which belongs to the Library of Congress archives. It is seen that the study of the persistence of vision led to the development of the zoetrope and other mechanisms which in turn led to the evolution of the motion picture. A hand-cranked projector is seen in operation. Today, film and television occupy a position of great importance, playing a significant role in entertainment, education, and information (advertising). The development of a typical Hollywood film is outlined, from its initial conception as an idea in an individual's mind, to the development of a story with a beginning, middle, and end. This requires a well-rounded script, and the cooperation of set designers, producers, director, cameramen, unit managers, and actors. Once the film is shot, it is developed and the rushes are viewed by the editor and director before the editing process begins. After editing, the musical score and sound effects are mixed and recorded. The final step is the mix, where the edited film, musical soundtrack, and script are fused. The Movie Makers does not attempt to outline the complete procedure for making a film, but it does succeed in conveying a considerable amount of information in a clear and acceptable manner. Students with no experience of movie sets or motion picture production will find it interesting.

### Utilization

The Movie Makers may be used in film appreciation classes to convey an impression of what is involved in the production of a feature motion picture. It does not provide enough historical information to be of much use in a film history course, but it touches on a number of significant and interesting developments which may serve as a teaser. The section on the final editing and sound mixing is particularly useful. It may be interesting to compare this type of production with the methods used by underground filmmakers and individuals who work on their own without the need for actors, directors, lighting crews, etc.

### Questions

1. Why were many early films printed on paper?
2. What is the theory of persistence of vision? Describe some of the earliest inventions which made use of this phenomenon and led to the development of the motion picture?
3. What are the three major functions of today's motion pictures and television, as outlined in The Movie Makers?

### Related Films

Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary

Basic Principles of Film Editing

Film Firsts

First Flickers

## Neighbors

Neighbors is one of Norman McLaren's earliest and best-known works and is unique among his many films in that it deals with the themes of war and depravity. Although it is a relatively old film it is as powerful and shocking today as it was when it was produced. Two neighbors sit reading peacefully side by side until a flower grows up on the line dividing the two properties. Each claims the flower and what begins as an amusing and playful struggle between the two friends becomes progressively more surreal and unpleasant until at the film's end the two men have degenerated to a bestial level, have ruined their homes, caused the deaths of their loved ones, and ultimately murdered each other. McLaren combines live action with pixillation to create a disturbing mixture of realism and fantasy. The result is a frightening comment on man's destructive impulses.

NFBC

1953

9 minutes

color

### Utilization

From a film study point of view, Neighbors provides a number of interesting considerations. McLaren's use of actors and props combined with stop-motion and animation is unique. (The original unedited version of this film is included in The Eye Hears, the Ear Sees, with McLaren's comments on its production.)

### Questions

1. Neighbors might be called a parable. What is its message?
2. What special techniques and effects did the filmmaker use to make this such a powerful anti-war statement?

3. What is the role played by the soundtrack in Neighbors as compared with other McLaren productions?
4. Compare the use of pixillation in Neighbors with that in A Chairy Tale.
5. Both Neighbors and A Chairy Tale deal with conflict situations. How do they differ in style and message?

Related Films

A Chairy Tale

The Eye Hears, the Ear Sees

Toys

Night Mail.

Night Mail is a classic documentary produced for the General Post Office in 1936 by John Grierson, founder of the National Film Board of Canada. Its subject is the "Postal Special," the first of its kind in England, which carried mail from London to Scotland. In addition to Grierson, a number of impressive names are associated with its production: Basil Wright, direction and scenario; Benjamin Britten, music; W. H. Auden, verse. Night Mail deserves careful study both in terms of its techniques and in terms of the way it conveys information. Technically, it makes use of fast cuts, dissolves, and closeups to create a tightly-edited and fast-moving picture which moves from train interiors to towns and farms and post offices. It shows the English people engaged in the important tasks of sorting, bundling, and transporting the mail. The train's journey provides views of the countryside and its people as it moves up from the south, through the midlands and the north. Statistics concerning pieces of mail, number of miles covered, and train times are dropped in tersely at intervals to provide a contrast to the unrehearsed comments and conversations which provide the bulk of the soundtrack. Towards the end of the film (and the journey) Auden recites his poem on the mail train and the strains of Britten's score may be heard. The rhythm of music and verse is linked beautifully to the movement of the train as it rolls across the countryside, slowing down as it approaches towns and stations. The poem contains all the visual elements of the film: the human interest, enumeration of detail, and the sense of realism.

A line in the poem, speaking of the eagerness with which all people await the postman, sums up the raison d'etre of the postal service and of the film itself: "Who can bear to feel himself forgotten?"

MGHT

1936

27 minutes

b&amp;w

#### Utilization

Night Mail may be shown as an example of the classic documentary. It is suggested that it be compared with Rail, a more recent documentary about trains produced by British Transport. This comparison might include significant differences in style and format (for instance, Rail was produced in color and has no spoken commentary).

#### Questions

1. What are the main themes expressed in Night Mail?
2. How does Grierson portray the British people? What techniques does he employ to give us a picture of what they look like, how they work and interact with one another?
3. How does he make the soundtrack interesting?
4. Discuss the use of closeups in the film. How do these contribute to the intimate nature of Night Mail? Do you think the film would be improved if it had been shot in color? Is it difficult to conceive of it in color? Why?
5. In what ways does W. H. Auden's poem echo the visual rhythm of Night Mail? Why do you think it was placed at the end of the film?
6. What is the significance of Auden's line, "Who can bear to feel himself forgotten?" How does this sum up the work of the GPO?

7. Comment on Britten's music. ~~Is~~ it appropriate? Is it necessary?

What feelings does it convey?

Related Films

Rail

Understanding Movies



Night on Bald Mountain

This interpretation of Moussorgsky's famous music was created by Alex Alexeieff and Claire Parker, pioneers in the art of shadow pinboard animation. To achieve the weird, shadowy effects which characterize the film and remind one of lithography or etching, the animators used half a million pins which were placed in an area one and one-half metres square. The pins were raised and lowered and lit from the side so that the shadows varied in length. The resulting pattern was photographed frame by frame and change by change, so that the result is rapidly shifting images which come and go out of swirling mists. These dream-like images, combined with the score, create a unique and extraordinary impression, since Night on Bald Mountain is thought to be the only film of its kind.

MGHT

U.S. Release 1965

8 minutes

b&amp;w

## Utilization

Night on Bald Mountain should be included in a film appreciation course as an example of shadow pinboard animation. It will also be of interest to art classes.

## Questions

1. What is pinboard animation? How is it accomplished?
2. What accounts for the blurriness of many of the images?
3. Why do you imagine this technique has not been used by more animators?
4. What other kinds of animation have you seen?

## Related Films

Alexeieff at the Pinboard

### Notes on a Triangle

An infinite range of geometric patterns, from a single equilateral triangle to highly complex variations and combinations of triangles, move in time to a waltz melody. Although the composition has been limited to variations on the triangle, and the color range to the three primary colors, the triangle splits into some three hundred transformations and the film possesses a richness and liveliness which transcends the subject matter. By the time the film concludes, the triangles, moving in time to the music, have taken on the qualities of dancing figures, and the close harmony of shape, color, movement, and music have succeeded in creating a world of their own. Produced by René Jodouin with Maurice Blackburn for the National Film Board of Canada.

IFB

1967

5 minutes

color

### Utilization

Recommended for a study of animation techniques, this film should be seen more than once to appreciate its subtleties. Notes on a Triangle is an interesting study of both shape and movement. In relating it to the graphic arts, it could preface a study of the paintings of Paul Klee, the later works of Kandinsky, and the multiples of Vasarely.

### Questions

1. Comment on the music which accompanies the movement of the triangles. To what genre does it belong? Is it appropriate?
2. Compare the evolving patterns on the screen with those produced by a kaleidoscope. Explain how a kaleidoscope works. How are the transformations brought about in Notes on a Triangle?

3. Notes on a Triangle creates optical illusions by the arrangement of shapes to form both two- and three-dimensional effects. What causes the viewer to perceive some shapes as three-dimensional?
4. What role does color play in this film? Could the triangles have been all the same color? Could they have been more than the three primary hues?
5. Notes on a Triangle has both emotional and intellectual appeal. Discuss this in relation to the soundtrack, the imagery, and the optical effects produced.

Related Films

Dance Squared

Flatland

Movement

Shape

Spheres

Rail

It has been said that John Grierson's purpose in producing documentaries like Night Mail was to prepare the British people for change. In Rail, a recent documentary produced by British Transport, the change is there before us. The major part of the film is a lyrical depiction of the era of the steam locomotives; the last segment is devoted to the electric trains which have replaced them. Rail employs no narration or dialogue, relying on the images and an evocative score composed especially for the film. It opens with shots of the vaulted ceilings of British railway stations. The trains move slowly out of the station, and as they pick up speed a montage of shots of crew, passing countryside, and the track ahead flash onto the screen. This is in contrast to more lyrical scenes of the quiet English countryside and romantic reminders of a past age in the form of old stations and railway equipment. The score and the film's rhythm change with the advent of the electric train. These, it is seen, have their own beauty, style, and rhythm. The message seems to be that a change is always attended by nostalgia, but is not always for the worse.

ACI

1968

13 minutes

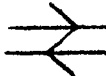
color

## Utilization

Rail may be considered as a contemporary documentary in which the images carry most of the weight. It is a good film to illustrate various shots and basic editing, and the concepts are simple and uncluttered. It invites comparison with Night Mail, Grierson's 1936 film on the

"Postal Special." A study of these two films should provide the student with a solid introduction to the art of the documentary film.

#### Questions

1. What is the theme of Rail?
2. How is this theme worked out a) through the visuals and b) through the soundtrack?
3. In what ways do the opening shots of vaulted railway stations prepare us for the general style of Rail? Contrast the old stations with the modern terminals shown towards the end of the film.
4. Compare Rail with Night Mail with regard to the relative importance of a) visual imagery to the overall purpose of each film and b) the musical score in establishing pace and mood.
5. What is the significance of the romanticized sequences?
6. In your opinion, would the film be as successful if it had been shot in black-and-white?
7. The logo or symbol for British Transport  appears at the end of the film and is highly appropriate in terms of the film's action.

Discuss.

#### Related Films

Night Mail

The Shooting Gallery

This Czechoslovakian production combines stills, object animation, and a haunting organ grinder's melody to create a powerful statement about the effects of violence on freedom and love. A soldier amuses himself at a carnival shooting gallery where the targets include a group of musicians, a family at work, a man climbing a tree for an apple, a one-legged organ grinder and his aged wife, and two young dancers. When the soldier succeeds in hitting the correct spot on a target, the figures are set in motion, and he smiles with pleasure. When he comes to the dancers, he aims and fires, and the pair begin their mechanical dance in time to the hurdy-gurdy music. But suddenly the music stops. As the dancers face one another their automatic movements begin to change. The music becomes lighter, more fluid and ethereal, as they are transformed by love and leave their fixed positions to float in an embrace to the ceiling of the gallery. The soldier, unable to countenance this new-found freedom and love, fires a volley of shots which brings the lovers back to earth. The soldier pounds the little figures with a mallet until they are flattened caricatures of their former selves. Restored to their positions in the gallery, they resume their forced responses to the organ grinder's melody. The soldier smiles.

SIM                      1970                      6 minutes                      color

Utilization:

The Shooting Gallery is an excellent example of puppet animation and is representative of animated shorts currently being produced in Czechoslovakia. Its theme, too, is a common East European one:

oppression of individual freedom. Technically the film is exquisite, even flawless. It is interesting to compare the different kinds of movement contained in the little drama. Stills are used effectively throughout.

#### Questions

1. Where was The Shooting Gallery produced? Is this significant?
2. List the characters portrayed in this drama. What do they represent? What does the soldier represent?
3. Is there a significant reason for the order in which these groups appear in the film? Do they help to prepare us for what ultimately takes place?
4. What produces the music in the film? Does the musical score adequately complement the action?
5. At what point do the dancers cease to function in a purely mechanical way? How is the viewer prepared for this transition?

#### Related Films

Calder's Circus

Chromophobia

The Hand

Toys

Toys

Fascinated children watch a Christmas toy display in a department store. Of particular interest is a revolving tableau of toy soldiers, tanks, and airplanes. As the children watch, the little figures themselves begin to move, turning their heads and waving. Then tanks roll across the ground, weapons are raised and fired, and suddenly the children are spectators at a bloody war where men are dismembered and left to die and explosions drown out the gay music of the toy department. The transition is made so smoothly and imperceptibly that the final realization that the game has turned to reality is doubly horrifying. As the scene returns to normal, the camera turns to the faces of the children once more.

NFBC

1966

7 minutes

color

## Utilization

Toys combines live footage with object animation and stills. The opening and closing scenes of children are shot "straight" but the transformation of the toys into tools of destruction is accomplished skillfully through animation. In some ways, Toys resembles The Shooting Gallery, but there are some important differences. Toys combines live action and animation; the transformation from inanimate objects to flesh and blood is horrifying. In The Shooting Gallery the humanizing process is lyrical and moving, and the return to an inanimate state becomes horrifying.



## Questions

1. How is the change from toy soldier to "real life" effected? At what point do we realize that this change has taken place?
2. Compare the soundtrack of Toys with that of The Shooting Gallery.
3. Comment on the reactions of the children to the sight they witness.

What viewpoint is the filmmaker expressing?

## Related Films

Neighbors

The Shooting Gallery

Understanding Movies

Understanding Movies is one of the first of a new wave of films designed to increase awareness of the visual media and their effect on the individual and society. It was produced by The New York Times and Arno Press and is relevant to social studies, communications, and physics, as well as to film study. Although it is non-technical and basic enough for junior high students, it has a sophistication which will make it equally acceptable at both the high school and college levels. The film's basic premise is that because movies (and the television medium) influence so many facets of our life, such as how we buy, how we relate to one another, and the causes we support, it is imperative that we understand how the medium works. In Understanding Movies the viewer is presented with a typical dramatic sequence which will be familiar to any movie goer: that of a man attempting to rob a safe, and his subsequent escape from the scene of the crime. The sequence is examined in such a way that the viewer is required to use his own sense of time, space, and proportion to consider the reality of what he sees on the screen. Some of the techniques displayed and analyzed include the expansion and compression of time and the arrangement of these to produce a desired effect. Scenes are shot in different ways, and then analyzed to determine their effect on the production as a whole, and on the audience. In one sequence, the action is speeded up and everything is accomplished in an impossibly short time span. In another, the action is slowed down to create a feeling of tension. Point of view and the role played by camera angles are also explored.

Understanding Movies lays a framework for analyzing the most common forms of motion pictures: the documentary, the theatrical production, television newscasts and commercials, and the educational film.

NEW YORK TIMES

1972

13 minutes

color

#### Utilization

This film will be a valuable teaching tool in almost all curriculum areas, but particularly in communications, arts, and film study. It has generalizability and, in spite of its non-technical approach and its appeal to a general audience, it comes to terms with such important elements as shot breakdown, camera angles, and editing, and approaches them from the point of view of, "What is the filmmaker trying to convey through these particular choices?" Understanding Movies, like Basic Film Terms: A Visual Dictionary, may be shown at the beginning of a film course in order to sensitize students to the films they will be studying and in order to establish a mutual framework upon which both teacher and students may build, or it may be shown mid-point in a film course when students have been exposed to a certain number of films and have developed an interest in the mechanics of film production.

#### Questions

1. Compare and contrast drama as it is presented on the stage and on the screen. What is the most significant difference from the audience's point of view?
2. Discuss the manipulation of the time element in motion pictures. What are some of the reasons why a director would wish to compress a lot of action within a short time span? Why might he decide to use slow motion or freeze-frame techniques?

3. A common complaint is that the public is manipulated by the mass media. Is this true? How and why does this happen?
4. Analyze a current television commercial to see what techniques it employs. How do the images and soundtrack help to convey the message?

Related Films

Art, People, Feelings

This Is Marshall McLuhan: The Medium Is the Message

APPENDIX

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