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Films of Maya Deren

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Maya Deren first achieved fame with her film *MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON*, a landmark that established the avant-garde film movement in the United States. Throughout the 1950s and into the early 60s she worked tirelessly championing the work of the independents. She also continued to make films until her untimely death in 1961 at the age of forty-four. Her reputation has grown since then so that today her films are considered to be at the forefront of the avant-garde movement and the most influential in its development. Her films are rich in ritual, metaphor, dream elements, dance and the reordering of space and time. For this reissue of her films, new 16mm prints have been struck from Deren's negatives.

Meshes of the Afternoon (1943). Made in collaboration and photographed by Alexander Hammid. Music by Teiji Ito. 16mm. B&W. 14 minutes. Rental \$40. Sale \$450.

This has been Deren's most influential work. Deren, playing the central figure, is caught in an extended dream that in the final scene spills over into reality. She experiences a series of symbolic images and actions: a knife falls and reappears on the stairs, on the bed, in her hand; a key is dropped, cascades down the stairs, is passed around a dining table, emerges from her mouth and becomes the instrument of suicide. Other events occur to indicate the dream state. P. Adams Sitney has referred to such films as "trance films". Teiji Ito wrote the score, based on Japanese music, in 1959.



Maya Deren in "Meshes of the Afternoon."

At Land (1944). 16mm. B&W. 14 minutes. Rental \$40. Sale \$450.

This is in some ways also a trance film. Deren has stated that it relates to the conflicts between its central character, played by Deren, and an external society.

A Study in Choreography for Camera (1945). Made with Talley Beatty. 16 mm. B&W. 3 minutes. Rental \$28. Sale \$300.

A film dance so related to the camera that it can exist only in this film.

"The movement of the dancer creates a geography that never was. With a turn of the foot, Beatty makes neighbors of distant places." —Maya Deren.

Ritual in Transfigured Time (1946). 16mm. B&W. 15 minutes. Rental \$40. Sale \$450.

Deren expresses concepts of the female psyche and sexuality by creating three mythic figures inspired by Greek legends. In the dance sequences there is a formal relationship to CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA.

Meditation on Violence (1948). 16mm. B&W. 13 minutes. Rental \$42. Sale \$425.

Based on the traditional movements of the Wu Tang and Shao Lin schools of Chinese boxing. Editing for continuity and using slow motion and freezing the action, Deren emphasizes the performance of movement.

The Very Eye of Night (1959). Choreography by Anthony Tudor. 16mm. B&W. 15 minutes. Rental \$40. Sale \$450.

"It is a ballet of night, entirely in the negative, in which the dancers are constellations which orbit and revolve in the night sky." —Maya Deren.

Divine Horsemen: The Living Gods of Haiti (1977). Produced by Teiji Ito and Cherel Ito from footage shot by Maya Deren in Haiti from 1947-51. 16mm. B&W. 54 minutes. Rental \$130. Sale \$850.

DIVINE HORSEMEN is a documentary on the Voudon religion of Haiti. It deals with the rituals of three cults whose origins stem from Africa. The viewer is introduced to a pantheon of spirits who communicate to the worshipper. There is also the phenomenon known as "possession". The film is filled with the dancing and music of the devotees.