

Document Citation

Title	The Soviet silent cinema : The cigarette girl from Mosselprom
Author(s)	
Source	<i>Pacific Film Archive Calendar</i>
Date	1973 Nov 12
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	Solntseva, Julia
Film Subjects	Papirosnitsa ot Mosselproma (The Cigarette girl from Mosselprom), Zhelyabuzhsky, Yuri, 1924

This film has been added to our retrospective of the films of Nicholas Ray because Ray informed us he actually directed a good deal of the finished film, though the director of credit is John Cromwell. One of four RKO productions that Howard Hughes asked Ray to partially re-shoot and thus salvage for release, THE RACKET stars two of Nick Ray's favorite actors, Robert Ryan and Robert Mitchum, in a taut melodrama about the mob and its political influence. Mitchum plays an honest cop, Ryan a gangster with political designs: Elizabeth Scott plays a nightclub singer caught up in the violent web of organized crime. The print is a good 35mm copy.

KINESIS: IMAGES OF DANCE ON FILM
Repeat of Program Listed Above.

CHOREOGRAPHIC SITUATIONS

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12

7:30 PM

THE SOVIET SILENT CINEMA

THE CIGARETTE GIRL FROM MOSSELPROM (1924, 35mm, 105 min, Live Piano Accompaniment)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:30 PM

A comedy filmed cheerfully in the streets, THE CIGARETTE GIRL FROM MOSSELPROM involves the related adventures of a beautiful cigarette vendor, an unemployed cameraman who loves her, a bumbling accountant who also loves her, and a fat American capitalist who arrives on the scene. The location shooting in the streets gives the film a very fresh quality, even today. The star is Julia Solntseva, who later collaborated with her husband Alexander Dovshenko on his great classics, and is today directing in Moscow. The director is Yuri Zhelyabuzhsky.

THE FILMS OF ERNIE GEHR ERNIE GEHR IN PERSON

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

7:30 PM

Ernie Gehr is one of the most important American film-makers working in the area of structural cinema today, Manny Farber, easily the most original writer-critic on film and better-known for his essays on the Hollywood "underground" than for his appreciations of the work of today's boldest independent film-makers, has written of Ernie Gehr:

"He's young, 30 to 33, lives and works in a Brooklyn loft: he's placed among painters-dancers-composers (Monk, Rancier, Steve Reich, Deborah Hay) who are mostly in the minimal vanguard: 'Perfection in art is a reduction to irreducible units' (Yvonne Rancier). What she means is that the logic/essence of an art work can be projected by ridding it of all possible arbitrary elements. Gehr has taught at Bard and Yale, his films are widely shown, he has considerable influence on other film-makers, especially on the new wave of famous artists making films (Keith Sonnier, Richard Serra, Nancy Graves, Bruce Nauman, Linda Beglis, etc.). Two or three dominant facts about this prolific, personally reticent, and steadily engaged-with-his-craft artist:

1. Along with Mike Snow, he has helped to perfect a new movie form, one that is stunning, visually and kinetically, and one that is a perceptual puzzle. The special ability of Snow's WAVELENGTH and Gehr's SERENE VELOCITY is that of inducting thought, solving the ambiguity of what one is seeing (One asks of SERENE VELOCITY how the image is achieved, if the rhythm is really changing, if the university corridor is actually lengthening, etc.).
2. The fidelity to the physical properties of film; this parallels the new evaluation of aesthetic experience going on in all the arts, revolving around such matters as 'presence', 'objecthood', and 'flatness'. By cutting away from psychological themes and developments, etc., these films attempt to direct consciousness to the here and now, the phenomenological character of existence. The film becomes a statement about present tense reality. (related to such disciplines as Zen and Taoism).
3. He works with conventions of modern abstract painting: his films keep insisting (like the painter Frank Stella, etc.) on the autonomy of the flat, bounded rectangle of the screen. The illusion in SERENE VELOCITY and STILL is supremely three dimensional but it's always held in sharp tension to screen's flatness. The materials inside (reflections, ghost effects, shadow lines, etc.) keep asserting flatness and rectangularity. Other painterly effects: transparency-mixed-with-opaque color, the sensation of seeing a line or shape drop or be wrenched into another direction, the surprising entry of vagrant effects into a known field."

Gehr's most famous work to date is SERENE VELOCITY, of which Farber writes: "The idea is 'to have the image savored and examined with intensity, allowing each drop of color, shape, and movement to be its own entity.' A University corridor is shot with zoom lens, each four frames photographed at a different distance, and in effect, a deep space is inhabited with a stuttering back and forth motion."

Other films by Ernie Gehr likely to be included in this program are WAIT (1968), TRANSPARENCY (1969), FIELD (1970), and STILL (1971). A less purely structural quality in Gehr's films is, in Farber's words, "an eerie, high-pitched nether world quality. Even the street movies, (STILL, TRANSPARENCY, etc.) have an out-of-physicality air, the people seem thinned out, involved in a deliberating slow down that makes them seem ethereal, involved in a dance." Ernie Gehr may also show sections of his current work in progress.

THE SOVIET SILENT CINEMA

THE TAILOR FROM TORSHUK (1925, 35mm, 84 mins, Live Piano Accompaniment)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:30 PM

A comedy by Yakov Protazanov, set during the NEP period, and centering around an elusive winning lottery ticket and the domestic troubles of a village tailor, played by the popular comic actor Ilinsky (who is also featured in CIGARETTE GIRL). It was Protazanov's third Soviet Russian film, but the first in which he would master the satirical comedy drawn from everyday life. A Soviet critic of the day writing in Pravda, said, "THE TAILOR FROM TORSHUK is our first successful comic film. Actually, our first success. The deluge of newspaper articles about comedies in planning, in production, etc. has continued unabated for the last two years. But authentic laughter in a Soviet film, from beginning until the end, is with us for the first time."

The Films of Roberto Rossellini

AT WHEELER AUDITORIUM

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 13

6:00

INTERVIEW WITH SALVADOR ALLENDE (1973, 75 min)

INDIA (1957, 80 min, 35mm)

7:30 & 9:30

INDIA is one of Rossellini's most elusive masterpieces. After its first screening in this country, Michael McKegney wrote in The Village Voice: "INDIA, on the other hand is guaranteed to satisfy every sensibility. A sensuous symphony of earth and flesh, yet all the more deeply spiritual thereby. Several loosely connected vignettes depicting the central impulses of men and the other animals--birth, death, sex, work, and play--unfold at a leisurely pace with a landscape that unites and contains them all, serving as a means to reveal the harmony of the universe. Elephants, tigers, monkeys, oxen, snakes, and flies abound, but INDIA on its most profound level is concerned with life only as one form of movement. The rapid rhythms of urban activity, the steady flow of great rivers, the throbbing pulse of an electronic generator, the inexorable passage of clouds over the Himalayas, and finally the unpredictable flight of a single bird--Rossellini's camera observes all, and provides for our eyes a common center of gravity, enabling us to glimpse for a brief moment the great circular pattern of the cosmos."

Plus

THE HUMAN VOICE (1948, 38 min) --The other half of L'AMORE starring Anna Magnani.

Kinesis: Images of Dance on Film: Kinetic Sculpture

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14 (Matin.=\$0.75) 4:15 & 7:30

KINETIC SCULPTURE SHOW AT U.C. ART MUSEUM (1966, 10 min)

SHORT OF COMMERCIAL FOR AN ICEBERG (16 min) Claus Oldenburg

ALEXANDER CALDER, FROM THE CIRCUS TO THE MOON (1963, 15 min) H. Richter

HOMAGE TO TINGUELY (1960, 11 min) by Robert Breer (1960, 11 min) by Robert Breer

Soviet Silent Cinema

THE NINTH OF JANUARY (1925, 70 min, 35mm)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 14

9:30

V. Vishovsky's film on the 1905 workers strike/uprising in St. Petersburg which culminated in the famous "Bloody Sunday" massacre.