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PORNOGRAPHY

AT N.Y. FEST

ANTHOLOGY

FLIP CROWD IN SUDDEN QUIET

By ROBERT J. LANDRY

Though nobody could quite recall any prior instance of pornography in the eight years to date of the film festival at New York's Lincoln Center an authentic sample was finally offered Saturday night (19) by Robert Nelson's "Bleu Shut." Shown was actual intercourse.

There was a curious angle involved as the short was being roundly booed and hissed just before the porno bit and the resultant shock brought silence, possibly saving the film from total disaster. It was generally agreed that this U.S.-made film was the absolute bottom of the barrel of dullness at the fest this time.

As if to emphasize how long the "short" was (32 draggy minutes), there was a clock insert on the screen and every single minute was rung up. The main doings were two off-screen voices trying to guess the name of a series of small pleasure boats, from a given choice of names. While the timing and cutting did earn some giggles, the monotony factor was, whether deliberately or not, worthy of an Andy Warhol man-asleep film. One audience quipster mumbled, "This will bring television back."

The porno sequence was obviously inserted in a spirit of mischief. Some would accept the term malicious mischief. It was also asked, "What will the Rockefellers say?" In short, this is culture?

Just such small trifles (surely an oversight) as this can unduly disparage a festival. Actually there has been a good deal of worthwhile stuff, though the eighth year will not go into the record as the best of the New York frolics. Whether the wide fluctuation in attendance from performance to performance should be attributed to the public's own "smelling out" of values or should more fairly be ascribed to the current business conditions in the country, with inflation unchecked, will no doubt be debated for some time, and especially by the Film Society of Lincoln Center Inc. (described here last issue), which has the responsibility for the engineering of survival.

(As to pornography, this was part of the scene at the Oberhausen Film Festival last spring and some porno stuff slipped into a couple of Italo sessions. The first reported instance was about eight years ago when "Flaming Creatures" was projected, but privately, after refused the screen of a Belgian film fest.)