

## Document Citation

Title	<b>New west coast films II: The influence of George Kuchar</b>
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Source	<i>Film Forum (New York)</i>
Date	1975 Apr 12
Type	press release
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	Kuchar, George (1942), New York, New York, United States
Film Subjects	Window wind chimes part one, Grenier, Vincent, 1974 The desperate and the deep, Kuchar, George, 1975 Nudes a sketchbook, McDowell, Curt, 1974 The wet destruction of the Atlantic empire, Kuchar, George, 1954

# FILM FORUM

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April 25, 1975  
For Immediate Release

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## New West Coast Films II: The Influence of George Kuchar

In its second program of new films by California independents, the Film Forum presents three works which represent the strong influence of George Kuchar upon filmmakers in the San Francisco area. Stylistically these films are highly diverse, yet they are tied together by an interest in the humorous, sexual, and dramatic levels of human experience. In characteristic Kuchar fashion the filmmakers deal with emotional extremes as seen from satiric, ironic, or whimsical points of view. The films are: THE DESPERATE AND THE DEEP (21 mins.) by George Kuchar and the students of the San Francisco Art Institute, NUDES (A SKETCHBOOK) (30 mins.) by Curt McDowell, and WINDOW WIND CHIMES PART ONE (27 mins.) by Vincent Grenier. Total running time is 78 minutes. The program will be screened Thursday through Sunday, May 8-11 and 15-18 at 8 PM. There will be a press screening Monday, May 5 at 11 AM. Please call if you wish to attend as time and date are tentative.

George Kuchar began making films at the age of twelve with his twin brother, Mike (their first film: THE WET DESTRUCTION OF THE ATLANTIC EMPIRE). A few years ago the Kuchars emigrated to the West Coast and began teaching film at the San Francisco Art Institute. THE DESPERATE AND THE DEEP, which George wrote, edited, chose music for, and supervised production on, was made in conjunction with the students of the Art Institute. George's script embellished upon "the troubled relationships aboard a steamship to Egypt" to create a parody of Hollywood melodrama-at-sea. The basic concerns of TV soap opera (the impending break-up of a marriage, the confusion and hostility of an only son, the desperate attempt to start a new!) are re-enacting for our enjoyment.

Curt McDowell's NUDES (A SKETCHBOOK) is a paean to the filmmaker's closest friends: a series of portraits (beginning with one of George Kuchar) based on stylized, often graphically sexual interpretations of his or her personality. The portraits also, at times, represent Curt's own sexual interests as he projects them onto the lives of others. My favorites are 'Barbara,' a Pre-Raphaelite vision of woman and 'Ainslie,' a musical spoof on glamour. The filmmaker's point of view ranges from compulsively erotic to light-hearted and self-debunking. A broad reading of the term "romantic" would probably best describe the spectrum of extreme, even outrageous, possibilities which Curt embraces in this sketchbook/film.

WINDOW WIND CHIMES PART ONE, a funny and ironic look at male-female confrontations, explores the thin line between love and hate, honesty and self-indulgence. Every couple develops its own set of rituals: jokes, arguments, apologies, fantasies, jealousies, petty cruelties, and put-ons. Vincent Grenier examines these areas by building upon material he has collected in the course of his life with Ann Knutson, who appears with him in the film. Their dialogues capture with uncanny certainty the tone, pacing, and significance of a variety of moments which pass between two people sharing a life. This is a gentle relationship, but one in which the classic problems of jealousy, familiarity, and pettiness emerge. By integrating the subtleties of humor and affection which are the underpinnings of this twosome, Vincent has made a film which is strikingly autobiographical at the same time as it gives us insight into our own lives.

Partially supported by the NYS Council on the Arts & the National Endowment for the Arts  
A project of The Moving Image Inc. and CIRCLE Inc.