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Bruce Conner's Filmic Compilations Of 'Found' Objects

Bruce Conner has been making films since 1958, eleven films which collectively amount to 65 minutes. Most of his films are packed with energy from rhythmic soundtracks and pared down, oiled-up images...Tightly, tightly edited, his early films blow off the screen like a pinball machine's tote board.

A Movie is Conner's first film. It was made for one of his "boxes" which were funky assem-

blages in the tradition of Joseph Cornell, one of America's great Surrealists. Their construction of "found" objects and photographs are the seed for Conner's approach to film.

A Movie is a dense dream of all the movies ever, subliminal melodramatics without plot or characters. Much of this has to do with the music as it counterpoints, then goes Dada with images galloping, sinking, exploding

and collapsing across the screen.

Report was made a year after John Kennedy's assassination. Using the Dallas radio news report of the day and footage culled from Castle Films, one of the largest and most common of film sellers, Conner reconstructed the historical event with media surfaces that had already become banal in 1963 from over use.

Report outraged many when it

was first shown, despite the fact the film contained nothing more than what was available to the general public. Conner was called an "exploiter," a confusion between subject matter which was found and the artist. **Report** is about exploitation and is a deliberately "questionable" film. When art is functioning it is never in "good taste."

His last film **Marilyn x 5** has put the cry "Exploiter!" on Bruce again. It is composed of clips from a 1943 'girlie' pic and a soundtrack of Marilyn Monroe singing. This is repeated five times. The woman in the film is not Marilyn. Sequences of motion are begun by the figure only to be stopped and begun again. This process is repeated again and again. It is a method Conner used in **Report**. It is a device that leaves the viewer outside passive image-intake and into a present-tense attention to detail and context.

Conner's films will be showing at the Pacific Film Archive, Tuesday the 29th at 7:30. At 9:30, following Conner's work, John Cassavetes' **Shadows** will screen.

of the middle class and his pictures have become almost formulated in their methods. But with **Shadows**, he sliced open narrative film making revealing possibilities most directors in America have not yet become aware of.

Also would recommend a documentary showing at the Archive, Monday the 28th at 7:30: **Methadone -- An American Way Of Dealing** made by two people from Dayton, Ohio, Julia Reichert and James Klein. It is a gritty Black and White report on the ineffective and dangerous use of methadone in treating addicts, focusing on one such center in Dayton. Contrasted with this is a center in Washington, D.C. which does not use methadone, and consequently is ineligible for federal funding. Like you have to take the drug if you want the government's help.

This center is maintained by the junkies themselves, something like psychiatrist R.D. Laing's houses in England for people with mental difficulties.

Methadone will be shown on Public Broadcasting sometime in

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Shadows was Cassavetes first film and one which held the seeds for his improvisational method of directing. It also was a forerunner of the independently-produced feature film. Cassavetes has held tenaciously to his integrity as a director, making money to produce his films by hacking around in television and such films as **The Dirty Dozen**. **Shadows** won Film Culture's first Independent Film Award in 1959.

The film fixes on a Black jazz musician and his White half-brother living in the Village in New York. Without a script and but a sketch of a plot, Cassavetes and his actors made a film that was way beyond the improvisatory notions of Hollywood directors such as Elia Kazan. And they did it with intensity and almost scary, psychological reality. They also made the film for \$15,000.

Since coming to California, Cassavetes has turned his attentions to the psychological mire

the future. The film sets a lot of things straight as to the drug problem as rendered by the federal government on the one hand and the actual conditions on the other.

With it will be showing a short film made by Dr. Donald Goldmacher titled **Do No Harm**, which exposes the pervasive and dangerous drug industry in quick-cutting interviews with doctors, nurses, patients and drug industry representatives. It will also be shown Friday, May 2 at 2000 Life Science Bldg. on the University of California, Berkeley campus at 8:00.

While both films are in another area than what is usually written of in this space, I feel they are most useful as they concern the control and health of our bodies, something which seems to deteriorate with each day.

--M.R.

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