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... so, instead of watching the film he turned around and he watched the audience in the light reflected from the screen. He found that the transformation did occur, that it did create an artistic effect in him.

I think that *The Flicker* acts as a very versatile art object. The observer can really use it to his own means over a wide range of possibilities. The beauty lies within the beholder himself. In most aesthetic presentations—drama, cinema, music—the common attitude is that the amusement or the beauty or the effect of the experience is wholly within the entertainer; that the entertainer is actually creating the impressions or the reactions himself. *The Flicker*, I think, presents a clean-cut case of the experience lying wholly within the observer. Most of the details, most of the impact, most of what people find in it, what they take away with them from having watched the film, wasn't there, was conjured up only when they watched this film: It didn't exist before, it doesn't exist on film, it wasn't on the screen. On the other hand, I don't feel it's my responsibility to be able to entertain everyone, because no one can guarantee an entertainment for everyone. Even the most classical ballet, for instance, would be loathed by most of the world, because most of the people just couldn't care less. *The Flicker* will provide entertainment for people who like different things to happen to them, who like to take a chance and have new phenomena occur, and to perceive a new phenomenon.

April 14, 1966

AN INTERVIEW WITH GREGORY MARKOPOULOS, ON GALAXIE

For three weeks, Gregory Markopoulos has been busy making film portraits. By now he has over twenty such portraits. The "sitters" include a wide variety of New York artists, poets, and friends, such as Parker Tyler, Jasper Johns, Panna Grady, Alfonso Ossorio, Frances Stelloff, Allen Ginsberg, Storm De Hirsch, Amy Taubin, W. H. Auden. Film portrait is a new film form. Recently, it has been used by Andy Warhol and, in *Songs*, by Stan Brakhage. I asked Gregory Markopoulos to answer a few questions:

JM: What are these portraits you're doing?

Gregory Markopoulos: These color portraits are in the tradition of portrait sittings. To these I have added certain film superimpositions, as befit the individual I am film-painting. Each portrait is only three minutes long, and takes about two hours to complete, depending on the intricacies involved. You see, I also time single frames throughout the filming. This means I still retain what I have learned from the aftereffects of *Twice a Man* and, even, *The Illiac Passion*. At the same time, without doing away with editing, I have incorporated what for me is a very interesting departure from my usual procedures in making a film. I would say, too, that my editing may thus become even stronger than before for I am working in that tradition which one might also name as documentary—planned on the spot, inspired by the subject, the surroundings, yet at the same time (because I am also editing in the camera) permitting an absolute freedom.

JM: You mentioned *The Illiac Passion*. What's happening to it, when are we going to see it?

GM: The shooting of *The Illiac Passion* was completed more than a year ago. It was edited from January to August of 1965. And, then, it remained idle in the vaults of the laboratory while I proceeded to find the funds to pay for the very expensive laboratory fees of printing. Each three minutes, you see, is estimated by the laboratory to be about \$500. Happily, thanks to private patronage (this seems to be the only way that a film of this type can be completed) the printing, as I have stated, has begun. I might add that the printing is so expensive because of the complexities involved with the furthering of my own personal film form (my own single frame variations) as a vital clue not only toward a new and much needed narrative form for the film spectator, but, hopefully, even beyond, toward the conception that the film-maker may well be one day the physician of the future. . . . As for when we will see the film—I would hazard that, keeping in mind the understanding of my laboratory, the enthusiasm of private patronage, and my own efforts to rouse some foundation to supplement the funds towards *The Illiac Passion*, it might be seen in the late fall.

JM: Do you see many so called commercial films?

GM: I seldom see commercial films unless they happen to be

Joseph Levine releases. However, sometimes through sheer accident, I do come upon a very important commercial work. I am thinking of Curtis Harrington's *Woman of Blood*, which I saw in Boston a week ago. It is excellent, and fascinating, that Curtis Harrington was able to put so much of his own work into the science motion picture. There must have been rapport between the producer and himself. And I do know from personal experience (*Serenity*) how difficult this is.

JM: Which of the new avant-garde films do you like?

GM: I would say that the films of Mike Kuchar interest me very much at the moment. Also, some footage by a young filmmaker in Boston, Tom Chomont, his footage (unedited) for *Night Blossoms*. I was particularly impressed with Mr. Chomont's footage because it reminded me of the painting (form and color) of Odilon Redon. Too often, the young new American film-maker will leave too many things to chance, thus avoiding that most important principle that, I fear, is lacking today in not only the amateur fields, but also in the professional, and that is *arete*, or excellence.

April 21, 1966

TO MAYOR LINDSAY

So the city is clubbing the arts again! So they are burning the books again, so they are tearing apart the little strips of films and the white blood of celluloid is drying in the impersonal and cold-eyed offices of the city.

The whole censorship and licensing business has become so childish by now that it's difficult even to get outraged about it. We all know that any official censorship of art (or life) is doomed, because man has entered into a different, freer, higher stage of consciousness. It's no use wasting much energy on fighting censorship: Censors and licensors are the last craggy symptoms of the old New York. There is a new New York coming! It's almost here! Mayor Lindsay: Please put your ear to the windows, and to the walls, and to the ground, and listen to the new vibrations in the air—and it's not only because it's April! It's a different kind of

April that's in the air. Cleaners of the city: Don't put the poor 42nd Street souls and artists in jails: Hire them to paint the subways white and in colors and flowers, and put music in subways, and 8 mm. movie screens so that the uptown and downtown ride will be like really going home, or like really going to see a friend. Oh, there are so many things to do in spring! Dear Mayor Lindsay: Don't let yourself be dragged down by the ghosts of the past!

ON FILM JOURNALISM AND NEWSREELS

I have been thinking and thinking these last few weeks, and now I should tell you what's bothering me. It's this: There are so many things happening round us, from the ghettos of L.A. to the smoky outskirts of Chicago and all across the country and in Vietnam, and in our own small city—big things, and small things, ugly things, and things like the eyes eaten out by smog, falling out and rolling into the gutters; and how the GIs are dying smiling and happy and in glory like butterflies. Things like that. We see nothing in our movies! And I am not talking about our poets: Our film poets have made the most beautiful poems in the world. I am talking about newsreels and about documentaries and about real life commentaries. With all the new techniques and equipment available to us, with almost weightless and almost invisible cameras, 8 mm. and 16 mm., and with sound, we can go today into any place we want and put everything on film. Why do we neglect film journalism? Eight mm. movies should be secretly shipped from Vietnam; 8 mm. movies should be shipped from the South; 8 mm. movies taken by the ten-year-old Harlem kids armed not with guns but 8 mm. cameras—let's flash them on our theatre screens, our home screens; 8 mm. movies smuggled out of prisons, of insane asylums, everywhere, everywhere. There should be no place on earth not covered by 8 mm. movies, no place without the buzzing of our 8 mm. cameras! Let's show everything, everything. We can do it today. We have to go through this, so that we can go to other things. We have to see everything, to look at everything through our lenses, see everything like for the first time: From a man sleeping, from our own navels, to our more complex daily activities, tragedies, loves, and crimes. Somewhere,