Michael Snow's  
So Is This

So Is This, Michael Snow's latest film in the self-referential mode, is a logical extension of his previous film work. As usual, it deals with the process of film itself, and how that process is manifested in it. It deals with the process of film itself, which is a central concern for Snow. The film is not just a movie about film, but a film about the idea of film. As the film's author, the first message Snow conveys is that film represents itself. Consequently, each word stands alone to exist in and of itself, yet it is advanced to represent an object, a dichotomy which has characterized much of modern art. A word seldom bears a direct relationship with what it represents, whereas images do. Pointedly, the most prominent, immediate and off-screen word/image of the film is this. This is both the signifier and the signified. Whence this is the film. And this, as Snow repeatedly announces, is the title of this film.

Lyn Martin


Marv Newland's  
Sing Beast Sing

Sing Beast Sing, Marv Newland's most recent film, has his signature. He amuses us with credits like "Special Effects by Accident" but don't let these light touches fool you. Sing Beast Sing is good black comedy, will make you laugh derisively and at the same time raise your awareness about ecological travesties perpetrated by man.

Following Marv's usual pattern, Marv Bert is carrying a cactus in a little red wagon. He sets the cactus beside a piano. A creature that looks like it just crawled out of the swamp is sitting on the piano bench. His name is Toledo. Toledo proceeds to play and sing a blues song that repeats the phrase "I'm mad." As he sings the camera pans back and forth over a living-room scene. Furniture, paintings on the walls and a table are set; the scene as if nothing had happened. The off-screen sound suggests that Bert takes a red wagon away from a child in order to cart the cactus, symbolizing the wrenching of the birthright from the new generation. Bert's defiling of the cactus suggests that the industry is destroying life giving plant.

Toledo represents the ugliness of this modern menace. This is a creation of the swamp where destructive bacteria are given life. He drinks muddy water while he plays his blues laments.

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