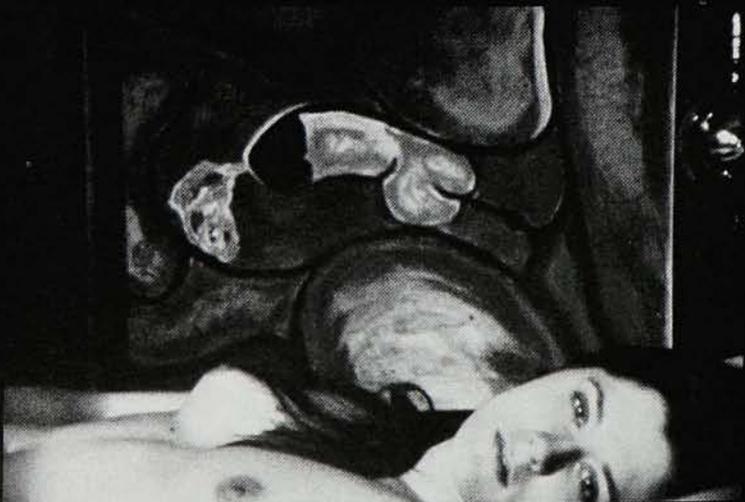


# TWO VISIONS



## Playground In Six Acts – Synopsis

I. (Black and white) – In a huge deserted theatre, an old man in a breaking voice bemoans the world where Man was the glory of Creation, Man as poet, philosopher, mystic. The old man has no brothers left, he knows those days are long gone. Meanwhile, two transvestites giggle and jeer from the wings of an empty stage.

II. (Black and white) – Faceless crowds rush around a mad ant hill. Industrialization breeds ugliness while a steadily beating machine-hum roars on.

III. (Color) – Starkly realistic carcasses, men with white masks, a nude woman, a table set for dinner; all become splattered with blood as the scene progresses.

IV. (Black and white with a red tint) – Familiar newspaper photos of the casualties of poverty, starvation, war, and racism flash by to a glorious march.

V. (Color) – A young woman masturbates while the eerie litany of two women repeats itself endlessly, emotionlessly relating their saga of dead love affairs, love stillborn.

A montage of the five previous scenes with all the characters pointing to the audience while music garbles.

VI. (Video, black and white) – Introduces a computerized creature in a wheelchair who has become the quintessence of mind over everything else. He is about to leave for a space journey to meet the First Intellect, known to the ignorant as "God".

*Playground In Six Acts, 1973, color, 23 minutes. A film by Daria Stermac, poetry and prose by Richard Fritz, special assistant – Kristina Ziobro. Distributed by the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, listed in their new catalogue – Films By Women.*

Every now and then you see a student film that makes you memorize the name of whoever made it. Such was the case with **Playground In Six Acts**, a 23-minute film by York University student Daria Stermac.

Two other people were directly involved with the film's production. Richard Fritz wrote all the poetry and prose for **Playground** after the concept was created. His book, *Telecoms from the First Intellect*, will be appearing late this spring. Kristina Ziobro, now a fourth year student at York, was Daria's assistant throughout the production and is working on her own film.

Daria Stermac has since graduated from York University's Film Program and has worked as a freelance script assistant, researcher, and production assistant for both CTV and Global Television in Toronto. She is presently working on a feature film script.

In many ways, **Playground** is a film of total despair. Daria likes to say she made it *in spite of* York University. Going to film school was, for her, "... positive in that it offered professional equipment and facilities as well as the freedom to do what I wanted. However, York did not encourage me to be innovative, to be creative, or to explore the film medium. I was not encouraged to experiment, I was encouraged to reproduce CBC dramas or NFB documentaries."

**Playground In Six Acts** has been shown at the Pacific Cinémathèque in Vancouver, the Ann Arbor Film Festival, the Encounter Canadian Film festival in Toronto, the Woman's Film Festival organized by Judy Steed; and since Rock Demers bought it, it will be shown in his Montreal theatre as well as in New York City's art house circuit.

However, getting **Playground** shown elsewhere has not been a positive experience for Daria. At the Student Film Festival in Montreal, it had to be entered in the Scenario category since there was no category for Experimental films. This seems pretty ludicrous at the Canadian Film Awards, but totally insane at a festival showing student films.

Television? "I have tried to show **Playground** on the CBC but the good samaritans in the purchasing department told me

that although it was very good, they couldn't get it on the air. And although the masturbation scene could, perhaps, maybe, possibly be shown to the public – the animal scene was an absolute NO NO because an artistic surrealistic representation of slaughtered animals was dangerous. Perhaps people watching it might be reminded of what they do to the animals they eat, and what they do to each other."

What about as a short in a theatre? Daria's encounter with a downtown Toronto cinema was very similar. "The person responsible for choosing the programs told me the film was too experimental to show in a commercial theatre. When I asked him HOW it was too experimental, he replied that he had screened it with 8 people present and there were 7 different opinions as to what the film meant. So he concluded it was not clear enough, not literal enough; and since people didn't agree about it, it couldn't be shown. Not even at midnight. And that same theatre showed **El Topo** for a month preceded by an animated cartoon!"

Daria Stermac feels a great closeness to Alexandro Jodorowsky's work, both in style and philosophy. She showed him her film when he was in Toronto promoting **El Topo**, and Jodorowsky was so impressed by her vision that he offered to assist her in producing her next film. It was thus that they met and the following interview took place.

### Daria Stermac interviews Alexandro Jodorowsky

*Alexandro Jodorowsky came to Toronto in the beginning of February to speak about his film El Topo. I had the opportunity to talk extensively with Jodorowsky and to be present at most of his official interviews. The following is an excerpt from a selection of his thoughts and ideas.*

I will tell you why I really don't exist. When I made **Holy Mountain** I was very interested in alchemy. We opened the picture in Paris three weeks ago with a lot of success and I had the great pleasure to be searched by two alchemists. One was Cancelier who writes books about alchemy, very well known, very old. They say he is 130 years old but when you look at him he is young. And we started to speak about the symbol of the Cross and the Rose, because we were speaking about Rosicrucians. He said the Cross is made by the Thorn, a Cross of Thorn, and in the middle is the Rose which starts to burn; but the Rose takes the energy of the Thorn which is the suffering. The more the Rose starts to open the less suffering you have. And in the end there is only the Rose and you have no Thorns.

When you start to make a picture you are starting to do with your suffering a work with your own Rose. You put all your suffering, all your violence, all your experience inside a picture. When you are really able to put all your life inside a picture – you don't exist anymore. You are astonished to see me as a normal person. All my abnormalities are put inside my picture.

There is a woman writer in the U.S. – Anaïs Nin. They say that she does not write books. She writes a continual novel because she writes her life. As for me, I am not making one or two pictures. I am making a continual picture which is my search for consciousness. I want to have cosmic consciousness, to unite myself with the whole universe.

They say that I am a madman. But I say what is madness? What is bad? What is good? Why do you need to insult a person? Why do you need to pick apart a person? Why do you need to be destructive? Every person has a god inside himself, has a soul which is beautiful. And the soul is like the universe with plenty of light. Our life puts a subjectivity which is darkness around this internal beauty and light. This darkness we call the personality and we hate the darkness of others. But in order to know the others we need to jump into them. You must at first die from within in order to begin living.

These thoughts are not only found in the oriental philosophies – you will also find this in the occidental philosopher Carl Jung in his work *Metamorphoses of the Soul*. Jung speaks

of the image of the sun. The Sun in the morning is new; in the evening it is old and without form. On the other side of the earth is the black sea of night. There the sun is reborn and in the morning it rises anew. All the solar emissions are that: the hero, the sun, returns to the sea in order to come back as a new being. *El Topo* dies and he is reborn, but he is like a newborn child. That's why they cut his hair — he's like a baby. That's why monks shave their heads — they are nothing. Some people say *El Topo* is really two films. I say that it is one. A man's life changed. We should live a life not of being but a life of the process of becoming, continually being born like the universe.

My first picture, *Fando and Lis*, was a play which I thought was like *Romeo and Juliet*. I thought that I was making a love story. I started to make the picture without money, shooting on Saturdays and Sundays for an entire year. I showed this film at the International Film Festival in Acapulco and it caused a great scandal. All the people wanted to kill me. They thought I made some kind of horror and since then the festival has been closed down. I asked myself — why are people reacting like this? Am I so different? I am not so different.

Movies are speaking in a language which for me doesn't exist anymore. When you come to the movies with a positive message the entire industry starts to tremble. I will continue doing what I am doing, and in order to continue I need to fortify myself and be conscious of what I am doing. I need to ask of movies what a person asks of the Holy Book or a Sutra or a Gospel or of a philosophical book or of a poem. We need to change the aesthetic by ethic. Film is the greatest art of our time but it is also the most dangerous, and the most horrible product of Industry. In the same way that Industry is polluting the earth it is polluting the human mind. You need to fight against the industrialism which is killing the planet and the product which is killing the mind. I need to give consciousness to the person. I am not speaking about political consciousness. There is another way. The universe is political, but it is also mystical, aesthetic. It is everything. I do not repeat images in my films because nature never repeats itself. The universe is always new — there is nothing that is not in the process of changing, of renovating itself.

In my films the use of color is not aesthetic — it is esoteric. Each color has significance and acts upon the mind of the spectator in an active and organic manner. Industry discovered this when they put certain colors in factories to make workers work harder. I use color in another dimension. Red is life, not death. In my film there is only one color — the brown of the earth, the blue of the sky, the green of plants, and the color red. It is a celebration of life.

The violence in *El Topo* is a transposed violence. You cannot say that Picasso is a violent person because he made *Guernica*; or that Goya was a violent painter when he painted the horror of war. I do not make spaghetti westerns where you are trying to give pleasure to the pseudo-masochistic public the same way that a pornographic picture gives pleasure. In my picture the violence is so exaggerated that immediately you say this is not possible, and I take out the illusion of seeing real violence and then it is a transposition. You know we are living in a very violent world. Through this violence I try to come to the human values in *El Topo*. In *Holy Mountain*, which is the continuation, the blood becomes blue, orange, yellow, and there are little birds coming from the bones. I took out the red and this way the violence is more transposed and the search for the interior great self is more objective. In *Holy Mountain* you do not follow a story, you follow an experience with me and with the actors, meditation, internal search in your memory. It is a training.

The art of pictures is the art of shadows and light. For example, in my pictures there is never night. I have made three films and there is never night and never any shadows because for me, a shadow is a subjective opinion and I am searching for objectivity. Human subjectivity taints the beauty of a shadow. The world is perfect. What is imperfect is our subjective

projection. In the *Holy Mountain* we are searching for the light. At the end the picture starts to disappear and you remain sitting with a white screen which is the light. O.K. It is an act of humor — all of this life is very humorous. You have the future — it doesn't exist. You have the past — it doesn't exist anymore. You have the present which is going, going, going . . . It's a joke, isn't it? Where is the present? It's a big joke.

In order to find you must not search. You must make a vacuum within you in the shape of the object you desire. When I want a special person for my film, I make an emptiness within myself in the exact shape of what I desire and in two days the person arrives at my house and says, "I would like to work with you." Everything that I need comes to me in this way. If I need money, money comes. Those are the ways in which one works. I am always very peaceful, very calm.

Christ said when little birds are there, they don't sing of what they will eat tomorrow. I gave myself to the arms of Christ. I don't sing what I will eat tomorrow. I am making pictures to realize a message that is coming through me. From *El Topo* I never received a penny. If I am here helping to sell *El Topo*, it is for the message which is coming. To make a picture is an act of life. If I come to another level of consciousness I will make another picture. I made *El Topo* and I waited. I waited. I took two years to make the *Holy Mountain* and now I am waiting a year already. I have refused three pictures already. They offered me in Paris *The Story of O* — \$200,000 and 25% of the profit — something like \$1,000,000. I refused. They offered me a film in Italy. I refused. They offered me in Los Angeles *The Devilish Man of Alfred Bestes*. I refused. I am not so rich to be able to refuse like this. There are seven of us in my family. Seven mouths to feed. But I am waiting. And for this mysterious thing of the heavens I have enough money to live always. I only do a picture if I have something to say.

I have now the idea of what I want to do. I went to Disneyland. I see Walt Disney like evil, like a demon. It was really terrible to see the poor people in Disneyland being corrupted by a society which tries to kill the child's imagination, the child's philosophy, intelligence, creativity, and teaches the child how to be competitive and a future buyer. Competition and buying — this is Walt Disney . . . He is a monster. With these awful characters like Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck and Pinocchio and Snow White. These are terrific pictures. They are for adults, not for children. A child must be guided to cosmic consciousness. Children are not being taught how to develop their human values. I will make a child's picture because I owe this to the child. I need to help the child.

I enjoy going to see films. It is relaxation. The cinema is done in such a way that it gives relaxation to the public. But there are very very few films to give enlightenment, to give knowledge, or inspiration. *Seven Samurai* of Kurosawa is a spiritual picture. Truffaut's *L'Enfant Sauvage* and *Les Enfants du Paradis* by Marcel Carne are spiritual pictures. In my next picture I want to come to beauty. I started to violence, then I went in training to come to beauty, and now my next picture needs to be the pure beauty. This what I want to do — to make a picture for a child. Or another project — the unknown life of Christ. In the Gospel, Christ despaired for 12 to 13 years. Nobody knows what he did, but in this unknown year of his life he realized he was a god. He went to India, they say he went to Egypt, and his biggest problem was awakening himself. This is the life I want to show. The life of a beautiful man. Not like John Wayne who is the hero who comes and kills all the people — he is the superman. In this society we need to destroy the monolithic insensible hero. In the history of movies there were only a few persons who were delicate and who were male. Fred Astaire is an example. He was so delicate, non-sexual, he was like a monk dancing. Even in the romantic scenes he was beautiful. But there are few actors who are like this. I want to search for this. For the beautiful delicate man.

# cinema canada

ADVERTISERS' INDEX No. 13

All Canadian Answering Service . . .	63
Alpha Cine Service . . . . .	52
Amanda Films Ltd . . . . .	77
Angenieux Service Corp. . . . .	27
Bellevue Pathe Ltd . . . . .	3
Braun Electric . . . . .	29
Canadian Film Digest . . . . .	73
Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre . . . . .	53
Canadian Motion Picture Equipment Rental . . . . .	2
Canadian Super 8 Centre . . . . .	40, 41
W Carsen Co (Eumig) . . . . .	25
Cine Books . . . . .	35, 69
Cine Graphic Publications . . . . .	63
Cinema Canada . . . . .	59
Cinequip . . . . .	47
Cinevision . . . . .	4
Alex L. Clark Ltd . . . . .	23
Crystal Films . . . . .	63
T & JB Products Ltd (Dictaphone) . . . . .	35
Film Opticals/MS Art Services . . . . .	79
Gordon Systems . . . . .	46
Grattan Productions . . . . .	63
Insight Productions (Life Times Nine) . . . . .	46
Kodak Canada Ltd . . . . .	17
Mackenzie Equipment Ltd. . . . .	77
Fraser McAninch—Soundman . . . . .	27
OECA . . . . .	27
PS Production Services Ltd . . . . .	84
Potterton Productions . . . . .	67
Quebec Film Labs . . . . .	81
Quinn Labs—Mirrophonics . . . . .	83
Ryerson Photo Arts Dept. . . . .	45
Sir George Williams University . . . . .	81
Videoart . . . . .	11
Arthur Winkler CLU . . . . .	55

Please mention Cinema Canada when contacting our advertisers.

# RENTAL • SERVICES

Camera, Sound and Lighting Equipment  
Film Crews  
Editing  
Neg Cutting  
Daily and Weekly Rates

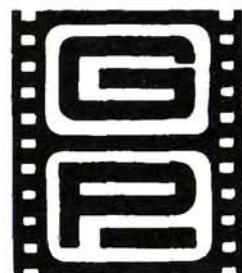
CRYSTAL FILM PRODUCTIONS CO. LTD.

1121 Kipling Ave. Islington

Telephone 231-8888

## ten years young

If you know us, help us cut our birthday cake. If you don't, and you want immediate attention to any film need, write, telephone or wire. We're in downtown Montreal . . . we're top-flight professionals . . . and we're ten years young.



Grattan  
Productions  
Inc.

Suite 507  
1440 St. Catherine St. West,  
Montreal 107, P.Q., Canada  
(514) 878-9638

## All-Canadian Answering Service



THE FILM ARTISTS "EXCHANGE"  
A NEW CONCEPT  
FAST, RELIABLE, SLICK

Inquire about our special discount rates to freelancing film artists

## SHOOTING NEW COLOR NEG - 5247 OR 7247 ?

By the Author of THE FIVE C's OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

The WORKBOOK Explains Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Color Negative: Exposure, Color Balance, Filters, Mixed Illumination, Day-For-Nite, Lab Timing, H & D Curves—and much more!

**Incredible Value! ONLY \$20! WRITE FOR BROCHURE**

Californians add 6% Sales Tax. Foreign Orders add \$1 per book for postage, handling. NO C.O.D.'s! NO BILLING!

CINE/GRATIC PUBLICATIONS • BOX 430 • HOLLYWOOD, CA 90028

