

ON (EXPERIMENTAL) FILM

by B. Sternberg

Last month's column introduced you to film journalist Florian Hopf. In Hopf's interview with Michael Snow, Snow commented:

"I can't use the medium to make some kind of specific statement, to say some one thing. The medium stays within the technological culture that we live in no matter what the subject matter. It's not a reference that takes you out to tell you about wilderness for instance, even *La Région Centrale*, because what it is, is using the image of the wilderness to make a particular cinematic experience. Each film is involved in a specific area of form and meaning. I prefer to think of an artwork more as a construct than a carrier of meaning. The primary thing for me is to make a powerful experience which comes from truth in the medium. I, hopefully, will bring your attention in a deep way to what you're seeing at the time..."

"My interest in art is international — yet I'm a seventh-generation Canadian, but I never think about it!

"People think they have a film culture because they've

seen *Citizen Kane* or *Potemkin* — yet they haven't seen *Brakhage*."

Michael Snow just returned from a week-long retrospective of his films at a festival in Turin, Italy, the *Festival Internazionale Cinema Giovani*. Michael's spirits were buoyed by the reception he received: the screenings were sold out, extra screenings were scheduled to accommodate the overflow; radio, newspaper and television coverage was significant; daily seminars resulted in much lively discussion and the food was great. Most of the audiences were young people who had never seen the works before but were there out of an interest in film; film, that is, without boundaries of genre.

Michael's retrospective was the first in a series called *New American Cinema*; the next will be a series of films from the '60s and '70s.

Some upcoming events:

- The fourth annual programme of avant-garde film at the Kitchener/Waterloo Art Gallery April 5-27, *Practices in Isolation: Canadian Avant-garde Cinema*, a five-

part series curated by Richard Kerr. Two of the films will be screened at the Princess Cinema in an unusual collaboration between gallery and theatre.

• ART WEEK, organized by volunteers at the Art Gallery of Ontario as a celebration of the proliferation of art galleries and activities in Toronto since the volunteer programme began 40 years ago. Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, one of the participants, is presenting *Survey/Streetwise*, programmes of experimental films at the Rivoli Café, May 11 8-10:30 pm and at the AGO, *Survey: '60s, '70s, '80s*. The '80s segment will premiere new works by James Benning, Joyce Wieland, David Rimmer, Annette Mangaard, Cindy Gawal.

• The Funnel experimental film theatre, Toronto, April 18-May 10, presents *Portraits of Women by Women*, a selection of work by women filmmakers from France, curated by Katerina Thomadki and Maria Klonaris and including a production workshop for women.

• Film Studies Association of Canada conference, May 21-24, Laval University, Quebec: *Canadian and Quebec Cinema — a critical Dialogue* offers seven panels plus film screenings. Panel topics include: Current Research in Quebec; Canadian Cinema; Women and Film; The Cinema of Pierre Perrault; Canadian Avant-Garde; Contemporary Quebec Cinema. Rick Hancox will present an evening of English Canadian Experimental Films (1926-1986) and Mike Cartmell, a guest filmmaker, will screen his films, including new works *Cartouche* and *Farrago*.

• The *Geneva Showcase*, April 14-18, Orillia, Ontario, is an annual event sponsored by the Ontario Film Association, an organization interested in the promotion of 16mm films and video for educational, social, cultural, religious and entertainment purposes. It is a market-place for new and relevant film and video. Says Nora Currie, a distribution officer with Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, "They're looking for programmes that are curriculum-based, that deal directly with what is being taught in the school. The people who go to Showcase — there are some teachers — for the most part are A-V department heads, film librarians, people who purchase films for school boards or libraries. When they decide to purchase something, the A-V department pays half and the interested department, for instance, Psychology or Sociology pays half. It's a mar-

ketplace, it's not intended as a film workshop, nor as a screen education seminar. So it would be difficult, I mean, it would be literally impossible to go there and introduce a new film form, such as experimental films, to the people who are there to preview.

"The ideal length of the films presented at Geneva, this is what I've been told — is twelve to fifteen minutes for classroom use. So in terms of making students more aware of experimental film, it would be interesting to go to OISE or the

Ontario College of Education and talk to people studying to become educators about media literacy and make them aware, at *that* point, of alternative forms of film that they can use in a classroom — because a lot of them still don't know that these films exist."

A NOTE/A REQUEST: Since a lot of what I report is of necessity Ontario-based, please send me info./news/or suggested topics with respect to what's going on in your area of this land.



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Grierson  
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Seminar '86

The Ontario Film Association invites film and videomakers to submit recent productions for the 12th annual Grierson Documentary Seminar. GDS '86 will take place from November 16-21 in Niagara-on-the-Lake. This year's programmer, Gary Evans, will make selections from applications submitted during the spring and summer months. Canadian (and international) film and videomakers selected to present their work will be guests of GDS '86.

For further information, contact:

Gary Evans  
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1001 Sherbrooke St. East  
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(514) 931-8731 Loc. 7223/7228.  
In Toronto contact Helen Lozinski, (416) 279-7002.




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