

AVANT-GARDE MASTERS

January 15–February 19, 2011

FROM CONTEMPLATION TO CHAOS

Saturday, January 29, 3:00 p.m.

(Saturday screening introduced by Millicent Brower, Larry Gottheim, and Carolee Schneemann)

Sunday, January 30, 5:30 p.m.

A sampler of films restored through the Avant-Garde Masters program, administered by the National Film Preservation Foundation with support from the Film Foundation.

untitled

Norman Mailer, 1947, 9 mins., 16mm, silent.
Restoration/Preservation by the Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin and the Harvard Film Archive.

Shot and edited in the months leading up to the publication of his debut novel *The Naked and the Dead*, Norman Mailer's first foray into filmmaking, at age 24, is a surprisingly assured, cinematically bold attempt at the surrealist-poetic cinema he became enamored with after the war. A regular through the 1950s at Amos and Marcia Vogel's Cinema 16, Mailer directed four features between the years 1967 and 1987, as well as having acted in films by Milos Forman, Jean-Luc Godard and Matthew Barney. The rediscovery and restoration of Norman's first film, starring the radiant Millicent Brower, a trained stage actress and one-time columnist for the *Village Voice*, helps shed new light on Mailer's cinematic ambition, clearly there from the start of his career, like some mercurial mistress to his literary muse.—Michael Chaiken

Blues

Larry Gottheim, 1969, 8 mins., 16mm, silent.
Restoration/preservation by the New York Public Library.

"A bowl of blueberries in milk, changing light radiant on the berries and on the glazed bowl, the ever more radiant orb of milk transforming into glowing light itself, with a brief shadow coda answering the complex play of shadows. The regular pulses of light framing the looser rhythmus of the spoon, itself a frame. A charging of each of the frame's edges with its own particular energy. Within and without, whites and blues, lines and curves. The pulses of vision, the simple natural processes, lift the spirit."—Larry Gottheim

Doorway

Larry Gottheim, 1970, 7 mins., 16mm, silent.
Restoration/preservation by the New York Public Library.

"A serene winterscape glides, as in a dream, across the screen, from darkness to darkness...Vision shivers, hesitates ever so slightly to savor, to hold still, but inevitably everything passes. Far becomes near, near far. Shadows seed their counterparts in the depths of the viewers heart."—L.G.

"Perfect works have a way of appearing unobtrusive or simple, the complexities seeming to

be so correct that they flow—mesmerize one through their form—a form that bespeaks of harmony between many aesthetic concerns. ... Larry Gottheim's *Doorway* is such a film. His concern for working with edges, isolating details, the prominence of the frame as a shape and revealer of edges, love of photographic texture, are all dealt with lucidly in this film. ... One is drawn into these beautiful images through Gottheim's poetic feel for photographic qualities—i.e., light, movement, texture—his ability to transform a landscape through his rigorous use of the frame to isolate in order to call attention to a heretofore hidden beauty revealed through a highly selective eye."—Barry Gerson, *Film Culture*

Body Collage

Carolee Schneemann, 1967, 4 mins., silent, 16mm film on video. From 16mm footage by Gideon Bachmann. Restored by Electronic Arts Intermix.

Body Collage is a visceral "movement-event" from 1967, in which Schneemann paints her body with wallpaper paste and molasses, and then runs, leaps, falls into and rolls through shreds of white printer's paper, creating a physicalized corporal collage. "My intention was not simply to collage my body (as an object), but to enact movement so that the collage image would be active, found, not predetermined or posed," writes Schneemann. This is a newly restored version of this seminal work, made in 2007.

Meat Joy

Carolee Schneemann, 1964-2010, 11 mins., sound, 16mm film on video. Restored by Electronic Arts Intermix.

Writes Schneemann: "*Meat Joy* is an erotic rite—excessive, indulgent, a celebration of flesh as material: raw fish, chicken, sausages, wet paint,

transparent plastic, ropes, brushes, paper scrap. Its propulsion is towards the ecstatic — shifting and turning among tenderness, wildness, precision, abandon; qualities that could at any moment be sensual, comic, joyous, repellent. Physical equivalences are enacted as a psychic imagistic stream, in which the layered elements mesh and gain intensity by the energy complement of the audience. The original performances became notorious and introduced a vision of the 'sacred erotic.' This video was converted from original film footage of three 1964 performances of *Meat Joy* at its first staged performance at the Festival de la Libre Expression, Paris, Dennison Hall, London, and Judson Church, New York City."

Original 1964 16mm film by Pierre Dominique Gaisseau. 2008 Edit by Carolee Schneemann and Trevor Shimizu. From *Meat Joy* Judson Church: Produced and Directed by CS. 1964 Sound Collage: CS and James Tenney. 2008 Sound Collage: CS and Trevor Shimizu. With Thanks: Paris Production -Jean Jean-Jacques Lebel, Festival de la Libre Expression. New York Production - Reverend Al Carmine, Judson Church. 1969 Edit: Bob Giorgio. 2008 Edit: Electronic Arts Intermix.

Jerry's

Tom Palazzolo, 1974, 9 mins., 16mm, sound.

Restoration/preservation by Chicago Filmmakers.

For 29 years Jerry Meyers has screamed and yelled at the customers who came into his deli - the film attempts to explain why people keep coming back for more. "A top award for the Fastest Camera in the Midwest. To have captured the essence of Jerry and his deli-in-action proves this filmmaker one of the few who can make the documentary a high art form, comparable to the best portraiture painting; and taking it, possibly, one step farther." - Larry Jordan

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