

Independents

Nods and ends

by Amos Vogel

Global Village (454 Broome Street, New York City 10013) The far-flung, ever-expanding activities of this pioneering major media center boggle the mind. Its founders, John Reilly and Julie Gustafson would have to be invented if they did not exist. They have nourished this organization—the first independent video group in the U.S.—into a full-fledged non-profit institution that lacks the usual negative accoutrements of power and has maintained its fervor and commitment. A major force in independent video, its multifarious activities span production, exhibition, study courses, festivals, and publications. It offers a series of national seminars for independent video producers and Public Television representatives; an annual video festival with the best selection of important new video docu-

Tattooed Tears, Joan Churchill-Nicholas Broomfield's moving study of a California youth prison;

Steina, a video self-portrait by the female half of the video pioneer couple Woody & Steina Vasulka;

Julie Gustafson-John Reilly's *Home*, a portrait of four families at key moments in their lives.

Recent events in their video/film series included evenings with King Vidor (in person), a program of Japanese avant-garde video, "Shirley Clarke's Choices"—a selection of experimental video from UCLA, and four programs collectively entitled "Vietnam Legacy."

Film Programmer's Guide to 16mm Rentals (Reel Research, Box 6037, Albany, CA 94706) The third edition of Kathleen Weaver's indispensable masterpiece is a "must" for anyone planning a film series or using films in class, home or in organizations. It provides

sources and full rental information for 14,000 features and shorts, each with director, release date, running time and other credits. With its list of over 120 American distributors (including small companies and individual filmmakers), it is the only comprehensive source for works by independents, ranging from avant-garde and personal cinema to social and political documentaries, from animation to short story and dramatic films. A most important feature is its various detailed indices: A Directory of Main Titles, of Documentary Films, of Newsreels, An Index of Directors (listing each of their films, thereby allowing for "instantaneous retrospectives"), an Early Cinema Guide 1895-1915, Group Title Index, Program and Cartoon Index, and A Key List of Film References (including key works and services as well as specialized filmographies). This work is highly recommended.

Boris Kaufman. No history of independent cinema can ever be written that omits Boris, one of the great cinematographers of our time: the man responsible for Vigo's *Zero de Conduite* and *L'Atalante*. The brother of Dziga Vertov and Mikhail Kaufman (Vertov's cinematographer-partner), Boris's loving and painstaking mastery of the camera subsequently led to *On the Waterfront*, *Baby*

mentaries in the country; it publishes *Airtime*, a newsletter for video artists and users and *Videoscope*, a quarterly magazine; it introduces new, as yet unknown talents at its Community Workshop evenings. At the New School it presents three of the most intensive video workshops in the country.

A brief sampling of their programs and films produced by them indicates not only their scope but also the extent to which video now more than supplements what used to be solely 16mm turf:

David Munro & John Pilger's *The Year Zero: The Silent Death of Cambodia*, a film not destined for PBS since its visual horrors and stridently accurate ascription of guilt to America may ruffle the feathers of its white upper-middle-class audience;

Paul Jacobs and The Nuclear Gang, Jack Willis's powerful true-life essay on radiation and nuclear weapons;

Doll, *Long Day's Journey into Night*, and many other works. I shall always remember this gentle, unprepossessing, perfectionist, utterly single-minded and committed artist, an enemy of the fraudulent and the slipshod, forever curious to see and support new talents of merit; he was always in attendance at Cinema 16's sixteen years of performances. The Vigo films—those anarchist triumphs, classics forever—would not exist but for his visual, "intuitional," poetic partnership with Vigo. Boris will be missed.

Len Iye. The great iconoclast of animation has left us: the man who painted directly on film before Norman McLaren, the man who worked with John Grierson, the man who won the Grand Prix at the Knokke International Experimental Film Festival with his hypnotic *Free Radicals* and also Maya Deren's Creative Film Foundation/Cinema 16 Award. An artist of deep originality, a true pioneer. If his work is not well-known to new generations, this is because Iye—with characteristic intransigence and stubborn integrity—refused to rent or sell his films at prevailing rates, insisting that since they were fine art, they should be priced accordingly. Len will be missed. ❀

Best
wishes
Amos Vogel