

The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film

11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019 Tel. 956 6100 Cable: Modernart

Cineprobe

An Evening with Peter Kubelka

Tuesday, February 8, 1972 at 5:30

Peter Kubelka will be present for a discussion with the audience after the screening of his complete works.

MOSAİK IN VERTRAUEN (1954-55)
ADEBAR (1957)
SCHWECHATER (1958)
ARNULF RAINER (1958-60)
UNSERE AFRAIKREISE (1961-66)

Born in Vienna, Kubelka involved himself with film in 1952. His writings on cinema also date from this time. In 1964, he collaborated in the establishment of the Oesterreichisches Filmmuseum, and in that year became a co-director of the Vienna Filmmuseum. Not only did Kubelka design the "Invisible Cinema" of Anthology Film Archives, he also participated in its conception and structuring.

"UNSERE AFRIKAREISE...is about the richest, most articulate, and most compressed film I have even seen. I have seen it four times, and I am going to see it many, many times more, and the more I see it the more I see in it. Kubelka's film is one of cinema's few masterpieces and a work of such great perfection that it forces one to reevaluate everything that one knew about cinema. The incredible artistry of this man, his incredible patience (he worked on UNSERE AFRIKAREISE for five years; the film is 12 minutes long), his methods of working (he learned by heart 18 hours of tapes and three hours of film, frame by frame), and the beauty of his accomplishment make the rest of us look like amateurs, or, perhaps, like children who can never get any distance to their emotions. The entire cinema is so fuckin' emotional. Kubelka's cinema is like a piece of crystal, or some other object of nature: it doesn't look like it was produced by man; one could easily conceive that it was picked up from among the organic treasures of nature."

-- Jonas Mekas, The Village Voice, October 13, 1966

"...In his early twenties Kubelka made MOSAIC IN CONFIDENCE, an intricate expression of love, humor, despair, and death. It remains an excellently conceived and edited film, but was too ambitious an undertaking for a new filmmaker whose persistent goal is perfection. His next three films attained that goal. ADEBAR is a one minute long dance edited to evoke a sense of the passing of time and the memory of pleasure.

SCHWECHATER, also one minute, transforms a scene of elegant drinking into a subtle figure of color and motion. Those who know the pleasures of wine can fully appreciate this film. ARNULF RAINER, a six minute film of black and white leader refuses simple description here. Its means are the simplest of any possible film and it is the fullest expression of its maker's complex personality to date.

In AFRICA Kubelka fused the scope of his first film with the control of his next three. His achievement recalls the success of the operas of his fellow Viennese, Mozart. I have heard vegetarians and critics blind with hatred for all Middle-Europeans interpret this film as a simple satire on the businessmen-hunters who commissioned it. Any fool could make such a satire. Kubelka has shown us some of the pathetic foibles of his sponsors, true. Yet he loves their humanity; and his film is proud, brave, silly, innocent, bored, and excited at once. The crucial irony and glory of this film is its vertical montage of sound against image. Buts of conversation are put in the Sphinx's mind, a grand savage lady dances to the noise of several hunting scenes... One could go on for pages describing the delicate interconnections of sound and image. This is a film that marks the beginning of the sound cinema and a high point in the tradition of THE GREAT TRAVELERS. I cannot name ten films which are greater."

-- P. Adams Sitney, New Cinema Bulletin, May 1967.

"And his works are sound films. Here, at last, is a filmmaker's ear that creates in contrapuntal accord with his eye in the making. He achieves this, too, thru his sense of the perfect - so much so that if, for instance, ADEBAR is projected even one frame out-of-sync the whole track becomes exceptional 'background music' but in no sense the experience of his making...and if the projectioning is perfectly sync-ed (the distance between gate and sound-reader exactly 26 frames) the experience is an indescribably new one for any with eyes and ears to see/hear it. He has even created a film (called ARNULF RAINER) whose images can no more be 'turned off' by the closing of eyes than can the sound track thereof it (for it is composed entirely of white frames rythming thru black interspaces and of such an intensity as to create its pattern straight thru closed eyelids) so that the whole 'mix' of the audio-visual experience is clearly 'in the head,' so to speak: and if one looks at it openly, one can see one's own eye cells as if projected onto the screen and can watch one's optic physiology activated by the sound track in what is, surely, the most basic Dance of Life of all (for the sounds of the film do resemble and, thus, prompt the inner-ear's hearing of its own pulse output at intake of sound)."

-- Stan Brakhage, Film-makers Cooperative Catalogue #4.

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Future Cineprobes

- Tuesday, February 15 at 5:30 - Special preview, FRITZ THE CAT. Filmmaker Ralph Bakshi will be present.
- Tuesday, February 22 at 5:30 - Charles Levine (Selected works).
- Tuesday, February 29 at 5:30 - Susan Sontag (BROTHER CARL).
- Tuesday, March 14 at 5:30 - Hubert Smith (Selected works).
- Tuesday, March 28 at 5:30 - John Marshall (Selected works).

Cineprobe: Made possible this year by a grant from Standard Oil Company (New Jersey).