

THE SOCIETY OF CINEMATOLOGISTS

The Third Annual Meeting to be held at

The Museum of Modern Art
21 West 53 Street
New York, New York

April 16 and 17, 1962

Monday, April 16

10:00 a.m. Welcome by Richard Griffith, Curator, Museum of Modern Art Film Library.
Response by the President of the Society of Cinematologists.
Appointment of a Secretary pro.tem. Report and recommendations of the membership committee. Election of new members.
(New members so elected shall be permitted to attend all subsequent sessions of this meeting, but shall not be eligible to vote until the next meeting of the Society).

Donor for House 235 E. 22 NY 10

2:00 p.m. Presentation of Papers by members: Discussion.

George Amberg, University of Minnesota - "The Rational of the Irrational"

Robert Gessner, New York University - "LIFE OF AN AMERICAN FIREMAN; Analysis"

Arthur Knight, University of Southern California - ~~subject of paper not known at press time.~~

235 E. 22 NY 10

*"Art For Whose Sake?"
Exp. Films*

8:00 p.m. Special Screening.

Tuesday, April 17

10:00 a.m. Presentation of Papers by members: Discussion.

John B. Kuiper, State University of Iowa - "Figurative Cinema"

Gerald Noxon, Boston University - "Cinema and Cubism"

Robert Steele, Boston University - "The Filmmakers Approach to Aboriginal Peoples"

2:00 p.m. Business meeting. Report of the Nomenclature Committee.
Election of Officers. Appointment of Editor. Old Business.
New Business. Plans for 1962-63 meeting. Informal reports by members.

Announcement of the Society's Rosenthal Awards - Robert Gessner, Chairman of the Awards Committee.

Presentation of the Prizes.

Screening of winning film

June '63 (?)

6 - 8 p.m. The Film Library will be host to the delegates and invited guests at a reception for Professor Jerzy Toeplitz in the Museum's Penthouse, 11 West 53 Street.

MINUTES OF THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF
THE SOCIETY OF CINEMATOLOGISTS

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York City
April 16-17, 1962

PRESENT FOR ONE OR MORE SESSIONS: Margareta Akermark, George Amberg, Gideon Bachman, Eileen Bowser, George Cohen, Paul Falkenberg, Frances Flaherty, Robert Gessner, Richard Griffith, Arthur Knight, Siegfried Kracauer, John B. Kuiper, Gerald Noxon, Elmer Oettinger, Robert Steele, Herman Weinberg, Colin Young. Jerry Toeplitz was present as a special guest of the Society.

April 16, 10:00 a.m.

Welcome by Richard Griffith, curator, Museum of Modern Art Film Library. Response by Gerald Noxon, president of the Society of Cinematologists. Gerald Noxon spoke in appreciation of the Museum's Film Library of the initiative by the Museum Film Library in connection with the founding of the Society of Cinematologists. He paid a tribute to the Film Library as the only place where one can find many vitally important film items; and he acknowledged the debt of the Society to Iris Barry and the Museum film collection. He also said that the Museum of Modern Art in New York is the only place in the world where Porter's "Great Train Robbery" and Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger" may be found under the same roof. He concluded by noting the considerable acceptance across the nation that is being accorded to the Society.

Gerald Noxon presented those persons' vitae who applied for membership in the Society. The following persons were elected as new members of the Society: Gideon Bachman, Eileen Bowser, Thorold Dickinson (former member re-instated), Martin Dworkin, Gyorgy Kepes, and Amos Vogel. An attempt was made by telephone to reach as many new members in the New York City area as possible to invite them to be present at the meetings of the Society.

Gerald Noxon concluded his remarks by announcing that the two awards in creative cinema established by the Richard and Hinda Rosenthal Foundation would

be screened.

Dr. Jerry Toeplitz, head of the Film School at Lodz, Poland, talked about the approach to film as an art form in his school. He discussed his bafflement resulting from his visits to universities in the United States where film is studied or films are produced under departments of audio-visual education, departments of radio and television, departments of photography, etc. Particularly at the University of Southern California Cinema Department, he observed how students seem to have to learn to do everything at once; i.e., produce complicated sync-sound films. He felt it is preferable for a film student first to make a silent film, and then do more complicated production work in planned stages of development. He specifically mentioned work he had seen also going on at Northwestern University and Bob Jones College. He spoke of his surprise at the paucity of our libraries of film books. At his school in Lodz the concern of the faculty is to create film makers rather than film scholars who are trained in another program of learning in Warsaw. He spoke of the dependence of the school upon the Russian film school that had existed fourteen years prior to the founding of the school at Lodz. His own work was instrumental in creating a film school rather than an audio-visual center as had been proposed and considered seriously in Poland prior to the war. What is spent on the school is a financial loss which is taken care of by the government. Tuition is free to Polish students. Student-made films are given to distributors for screenings throughout Poland. There followed considerable discussion during which Mr. Toeplitz answered many questions about his school.

2:00 p.m.

The afternoon session was opened by George Amberg with his presentation of a talk and readings from his writings on the subject, "The Rational of the Irrational." He spoke of the surrealist film and surrealism in the film.

Films made by surrealists were made as the result of a metaphysical and
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philosophical rationale. He addressed himself to the questions: Why did the surrealists not make better films and why did they stop making films? Richter, Bunuel, and Cocteau were mentioned as the exceptions who have continued to make surrealist films. He asked why there has been so little continuity in this form of film and why this vast field has not been researched. He mentioned works of Bunuel, Dali, Clair, Man Ray, Leger, Marcel Duchamps, Vigo, Dreyer, Bergman, and Hitchcock. He spoke of the overlapping of the dadaist and surrealist films and the putting of poetry and painting into film equivalents. A discussion followed.

Robert Gessner presented a paper, "Life of an American Fireman: Analysis," which will be found reproduced in full in Volume II of the Journal of the Society. Arthur Knight presented a paper, "Art for Who's Sake?," which will be found reproduced in full in Volume II of the Journal of the Society.

Arthur Knight's thesis was hotly opposed in discussion of his paper by Robert Gessner, Gerald Noxon, and Colin Young. They felt that the backwardness of audiences and the essence of the creative process destined the necessity of a film maker's making a film that pleases himself and that it not be compromised from the outset by the necessity to be accepted by a mass audience. Sigfried Kracauer said that persons who believe film is a medium by way of which they can express themselves are frustrated artists, and they believe mistakenly they can express by way of film what is going on inside of them. This can be achieved by the painter or writer but not the film maker. The representativeness of the object (photographic image) in films sets it apart from the presentation of one's feeling and being by way of pigment and words.

Jerry Toeplitz said our error is in distributing experiments as if they are films instead of merely try-outs at film making. Just as sketches of artists, except for the truly great artists, do not go on exhibition, film

experiments should not be shown. To make an experimental film is not enough. Experiment should lead to the making of a film that is an art object which gives evidence of a true artist at work.

A question was posed as to the dividing line between an experiment and a finished product. Is there such a thing? Who is to make the distinction? Can we be arbitrary about the matter? The artist must be modest and honest and not let himself be exploited by unscrupulous distributors who wish to make money by way of unworthy experiments. Entr'Acte is an example of a film exercise that has value despite its highly experimental quality. The difference was pointed out between the film maker who says, "It is just an experiment, but who can I get to distribute it?" and the experimenter who works as a scientist because he defines his purpose and has a vision of what his finished product may be. Sigfried Kracauer said he had known a lot of artists in his life, but he had never known any who do as much talking about the producing of creative art as contemporary experimental film makers. The genuine artist does not seem driven to produce "creative art" as do many of our young film makers.

April 17, 10:00 a.m.

John Kuiper introduced his paper, "Figurative Cinema" with the raison d'etre that despite our abundant praise for the montage of Sergei Eisenstein frequently we are foggy as to how Eisenstein achieved his results. By talk and slides John Kuiper gave examples of Eisenstein's cinematic trope; i.e., the placing of two dissimilar images side by side which give rise to a generalization of meaning in the mind of the spectator. He gave illustrations of differing subject matter presented with a similarity of form which creates a meaning by way of contrast. He discussed the simile, metaphor, and discursive versus presentational present in Eisenstein's silent films. In the discussion which followed,

Paul Falkenberg wondered about the questionable value of analysis of shots.

rather than sequences. Robert Gessner said we cause confusion and get into all kinds of trouble when we analyze one art form in terms of another; i.e., film form in terms of literary form. Gerald Noxon felt that John Kuiper had opened up a whole field of experimentation which is needed - analysis in detail as well as in general. Jerry Toeplitz said that we make a great mistake if we analyze the work of Eisenstein according to one theory about his work, professed by Eisenstein, because in his writings he changed his theories at least four times. We can't say such and such is an imitation of Eisenstein; we must ask which Eisenstein we are discussing. All film makers imitate and follow Eisenstein in different ways drawn from his different periods of work. It is necessary to have an historical approach to the work of a film master like Eisenstein. Gerald Noxon presented a paper entitled, "Cinema and Cubism;" which will be found reproduced in full in Volume II of the Journal of the Society. In the discussion which followed Colin Young said that Last Year at Marienbad is a cubist film, if we use the word the same way it is used in painting. Gerald Noxon said he used the word as it was used in 1905-15 when the initial inventive cubist work was done. He was thinking particularly of the work of Picasso, Braque, and Duchamp. Colin Young said that when shots rather than scenes are broken down into fragments and reconstructed from fragments, we have discarded the reconstruction mode of chronology and renaissance dramaturgy. Jerry Toeplitz said there is a link between cubist painting and the new vision in cinema. Literary cubists such as Apollinaire were the first theoreticians who understood cubism and initiated the revolution taking place in cinema. Gerald Noxon said it is necessary to consider film in relation to art forms to understand the influence of one on the other. Because of our failure to do this, we have no basis for film criticism. We lack connections with other aesthetic criticism, which explains our uneasiness with the state of film criticism and the development of personal feuds between

individual critics and groups of critics. We do not have criticism of film in a true sense comparable to that practiced in other arts, and we greatly need it. Colin Young asked if the critic shouldn't depart from the usual canons of criticism when film makers are working in different styles; e.g., the style of the Japanese director Ozu versus that of Western directors.

2:00 p.m.

The report of the Nomenclature Committee was made by Robert Gessner. Views were read and expressed concerning the name of the Society by Kenneth MacGowan, Norman Holland, George Amberg, George Cohen, Richard Griffith, Elmer Oettinger, and Gerald Noxon. Colin Young moved that the Nomenclature Committee prepare a list of proposed new names for the Society and that the list should be sent to all members of the Society in order that they might express their preferences in this connection by mail. The President agreed that this suggestion should be referred to the Committee. Gerald Noxon reported that resignations from the Society had been received from James Card and George Pratt. Because of nonpayment of dues, Robert Gardner and Andries Deinum were dropped from membership.

Colin Young reported on the difficulties and delays pertaining to the publication of papers given at the second annual meeting of the Society held at George Eastman House, Rochester, N. Y. Disappointment was expressed by members of the Society that the publication had not taken place. Colin Young explained his uncertainty as to whether he had been appointed as editor of publications for the Society, his having asked the president to send him a formal note of his appointment, which he did not receive, and his wish that the first publications of the Society be carefully undertaken and be as representative of the Society as possible. He wished the papers he had on hand for publication be sent to members of the Society for their comment to be published

with the papers despite the president's directive of June 12, reiterated in letters to Colin Young of November 16 and December 18, 1961 and acknowledged by Colin Young to Gerald Noxon in a letter dated December 12, 1961, that the papers be published in the best form possible and with a minimum of delay. Colin Young proposed that the editor or editorial committee should be advised of the Society's editorial-publication policies. George Amberg asked if all or a few papers were to be published. Colin Young said this had not been discussed. Gerald Noxon and Robert Gessner said that it had been discussed at the Second Annual Meeting in Rochester, that the usual policy of learned societies to publish all papers read to the society and that it had been decided at the Rochester meeting that the Society would try to follow this procedure. Colin Young said that perhaps a recording secretary rather than an editor was needed by the Society. He asked if his report could be accepted and what the policy of the Society was regarding publications. The president tabled the report and said it needed discussion by the council, and that perhaps the Society does not need an editor at this stage. Gerald Noxon asked for informal reports from members. Arthur Knight spoke about the new Hollywood museum. He said that it is now much more than the dream that has been talked of since 1939. A building to house many materials having to do with the history of the film has been designed and the location of the building has been settled. The building and the land for it are guaranteed. Arthur Knight answered many questions and gave an abundance of promising information about the prospects of the museum. Knight said the Society was invited to the Lytton Center of Visual Arts, 8150 Sunset Boulevard, Hollywood 46, California, for its 1962-63 annual meeting. It is hoped that transportation may be made available for those members presenting papers, but as yet there is no promise of this aid. Gerald Noxon said what ways of financing travel to a West Coast meeting would be explored. A message from Norman Holland was read expressing

the wish that the Annual Meeting be held in either September or June rather than in Easter week. Gerald Noxon proposed a referendum of the membership to select the meeting time.

Richard Griffith, treasurer, reported that the Society had no debts and that it had a bank balance of \$300.

Robert Gessner mentioned expenses incurred in the selection of the two Rosenthal award winners and explained that all such expenses were covered by a special grant from the Rosenthal Foundation.

The following officers were elected for the coming year:

President, Gerald Noxon

Secretary, Elmer Oettinger

Treasurer, Robert Steele

Councilman, Paul Falkenberg

Richard Griffith moved that Robert Gessner should express the appreciation of the Society to Richard and Hinda Rosenthal for the awards granted by their Foundation. This move was seconded by Arthur Knight and voted upon. Arthur Knight made a motion for adjournment which was seconded by Elmer Oettinger.

5:00 p.m.

Richard and Hinda Rosenthal, guests of the Society, arrived at the Museum of Modern Art screening room for the presentation of the Rosenthal awards and the screening of the award-winning film. Robert Gessner expressed the appreciation of the Society to Richard and Hinda Rosenthal and said that judging from the scenarios and films submitted, he believed there is a grass roots feeling among contemporary young people for cinema as a language. Over twenty-five films and over fifty scenarios had been submitted in the competition. Robert Gessner asked Richard Rosenthal to share his feelings about the granting of these awards with the group. Richard Rosenthal said the concept behind the

giving of the awards in film is analogous to the concept motivating the giving of other Rosenthal Foundation awards in arts and science; they are awards for excellence regardless of immediate commercial acceptance of the work of a person who has yet to achieve commercial recognition. The Rosenthal Awards are intended to encourage those with talent in the hopes that such talent will be developed and in this respect will be tangibly assisted by the award. In the case of past awards given to painters and novelists the awards had served this purpose and paved the way for the wide recognition of their talent which had come later. Richard Rosenthal expressed the expectation that the two film awards will do for their recipients what awards in arts and science have done in the past - that is to say honor those who have the rare characteristic of excellence. Robert Gessner, chairman of the Society's Awards Committee, presented \$1,000 Rosenthal Awards to Vernon Zimmerman of Palos Park, Illinois, for Lemon Hearts, "the best film made by an American under twenty-five years of age," and to Tom Pathe of East Hartford, Connecticut, for The Candy Room, "the best original shooting script." The Awards Committee which was unanimous in their selections, consisted of Robert Gessner, Gerald Noxon, Golbert Seldes, and Kenneth Macgowan, and a representative of the Rosenthal Foundation. Both winners were present and personally received their awards. The film Lemon Hearts was screened. Vernon Zimmerman spoke about some of the circumstances and limitations under which his film had been made. From 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. the Museum of Modern Art Film Library was host to the Society of Cinematologists and guests at a reception in the Museum's penthouse given in honor of Professor Jerry Toeplitz.