

others did not receive any recognition whatsoever. Needless to say, I had only one vote on the jury. However, while I would have liked the film to win a higher award, I must say that I still felt quite pleased with the Special Citation it received.

Very sincerely yours,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

AV:pg
Encl.



Letter to Amos Vogel from Stan Brakhage, 5/13/57

May 13, 1957

Dear Amos,

The brochure is impressive. I haven't received a copy from C 16 yet, but Willard sent me his. You undoubtedly have the most impressive display of films in the entire country, possibly in the world. I was delighted that you haven't worried about including film classics, but have concentrated upon new films. This is, of course, where distribution (even mention) is terribly needed; and you are the only one who is in any way attempting to solve the problem. I thought the write-ups exhibited remarkable taste, considering what you have to appeal to in copy in order to get them distributed at all. I, for one, was completely satisfied with the blurbs on my own films. And, believe me, after my recent experiences with the sex and sensational school of advertising in L. A. (you know whom) I appreciate your care in this matter.

I have only one boner to pick, and I guess I'll pick it so that you'll know my demanding nature hasn't gone completely to pot here in the back country. I am not very happy to discover that you feel the films you are distributing are only "Offered as significant efforts to broaden the scope of the film medium, rather than as accomplished works of art." I feel that you are underestimating the majority of the films you offer. Even within my own extremely strict criteria, I find that there are undoubtedly no more accomplished works of art in the history of cinema than: Anger's "Eaux d'artifice", Maas "Geography of the Body", "Hurry, Hurry" by Marie, Peterson's "Mr. Frenhofer and the Minotaur", or Broughton's "Mothers day", or (for that matter) "Desistfilm", just to name my favorites of these, pardon the expression, "artists".

I am very curious about the films of Peter Weiss. I have never seen any of his work. I am also intrigued by "Escape", the Danish film by Mertz & Roos. Could you pick out one of the Weiss films (one you think would be the best for me to see) "Escape", and the best of the two films Soren Melson did, and send them to me for viewing? It's about time I get some idea of what's happening in European experimental film. Charge me the least you can, but the most you have to, and send them

as soon as possible. I will be unendingly grateful, will handle them with gloves on (clean gate and all that), look at them privately, and return them immediately.

Even though I'm making a hell of a lot of money (for me), which is to say I'm making money, I'm up to my neck in debts and expenses. I bought a car, am taking pills and eating steaks to keep my blood from crapping out again, etc. I could use a \$50.00 advance right now to get the print of my new color film. It is the one of the two lovers in the forest; and it has become so unbelievably beautiful in re-editing and re-editing that I can scarcely believe I've ever made a film before. You will, of course, have a copy for viewing as soon as the sound track is finished. I have sunk some money already into what promises to be my first feature length film. I don't want to tell you, or anyone, more about it until I know what it's going to be myself. The paradox of that statement is that once I've made the film I won't be able to talk about it because everything I have to say will have been said visually and done with.

The new German film sounds terribly exciting. When will there be a 16mm print? The new Boulder Cinema Club president is Walt Newcomb (boy in negative on "Way to Shad Gard") and I am pushing for a solid line up of C 16 films. This is personal necessity as much as philanthropy. If I have to sit through another Museum of Modern Art antique star-system film exhibition program at an experimental film club meeting, I'll simply die of boredom.

Can't think of anything else. . . You asked about my health—I'm feeling well enough to be very much alive and creating again. The blood is still a little low count, but then I'm charmed. If I haven't been downed yet, I don't imagine I ever will be.

Until I hear from you. . .

[hw] Stan

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[The "brochure" Brakhage mentions is a 21-page catalogue of films for rent, published by Cinema 16 in Spring 1956. It was the third of four Cinema 16 rental brochures and catalogues. The statement in the rental catalogue that Brakhage has a problem with was included in the first three catalogues; in the fourth (published in 1963), Vogel modified the statement to read: "Produced by independent film artists, these are explorations in the cinema. Offered as significant efforts to broaden the scope of the film medium and further develop its aesthetic vocabulary and potential, these films express the psychological and emotional tensions of modern life; delve into the subconscious; explore the world of color and abstract images; experiment with cinematic devices and synthetic sound" (p. 3). The film of the "two lovers in the forest," mentioned in paragraph 4, is Loving, with filmmaker Carolee Schneemann and composer James Tenney. The film that promises to be Brakhage's "first feature" is, I assume, Anticipation of the Night (1958), which at forty minutes, was the longest film (by fifteen minutes) he had made until then.]



Letter to Amos

July 28, 1957

Dear Amos,

You will probably have a good beginning in your search for a new direction toward the sum of your art. I am just being finished with my first photograph in L. I am just being finished etc. not only unproductive instance, under the product of scapart almost entirely and "Nightcats" run both this color

I want all three films otherwise. This is I hope you will give a search in so much time for these films with me on this brought them around and their subsequent

I can send you a copy of Tyler. I think he has time. Parker has later as I will re-off tonight.

I have shot 2000 on. It is turning always, in a bin dollar advance replied to either of the last state you would be on a request for

I have some advice married and an employment through any suggestion aspects of my new now editor in chief "photographer"

Letter to Amos Vogel from Stan Brakhage, 7/28/57

July 28, 1957

Dear Amos,

You will probably have received the three color films by now. I feel that this is a good beginning in what is essentially a new direction in film for me. The direction has been forming for the past three years, "The Wonder Ring" having been made toward the summer months of my first stay in N. Y. C., "Nightcats" have been photographed in L. A. at the same time "Flesh of Morning" was created, and "Loving" just being finished. All three have a perfection of color, form, movement, rhythm, etc. not only unparalleled in my own work but in film in general. "Nightcats", for instance, underwent over 20 complete editings to make it perfect, and "Loving" is the product of some 30 editings (that is, the films were spliced together and broken apart almost entirely that number of times). The response to "The Wonder Ring" and "Nightcats" was enthusiastic at Boulder Film Club. The S. F. Museum wants to run both this coming fall. "Loving" has been shown no where as yet.

I want all three films shown together to give each one a context they couldn't have otherwise. This is especially essential due to the shortness of the films individually. I hope you will agree with me. I must also ask for silence, as three years of intensive search in sound has produced no musical or experimental sound accompaniment for these films which is anything but destructive. The S. F. Museum bickered with me on this point by mail; but they finally agreed with my view. I think what brought them around was an attempt to find a musical accompaniment themselves and their subsequent failure.

I can send you statements on both "The Wonder Ring" and "Nightcats" by Parker Tyler. I think he has been more illuminating as to the films than I could be at this time. Parker hasn't, as yet, seen "Loving". But, those statements will have to follow later as I will retype them so that I don't lose his copy; and I want to get this letter off tonight.

I have shot 2000 ft. of color film toward the feature length night film I am at work on. It is turning out beautifully, beyond my wildest expectations. I am still, as always, in a bind to pay film expenses to get it finished. I could still use the fifty dollar advance which I asked you for so many months ago and which you never replied to either by check or letter. I have been hard-put to understand this as one of the last statements you made to me in New York was that if I needed an advance you would be happy to send it. I am not desperate for the money, however silence on a request for money is usually embarrassing to both parties concerned.

I have some addition news which will probably surprise you. I am engaged to be married and am returning to New York as soon as I can arrange for suitable employment there where my fiancee and I intend to establish our living. If you have any suggestions as to film companies I might apply to, considering the commercial aspects of my movie employment (usually "editor" as here in Denver where I am now editor in charge of the government contract with Martin Co, and occasionally "photographer", and when occasion demands, just about any occupation having to

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do with the making of motion pictures) please send me such advice. I am already at work on N.B.C. and am planning to advertise my abilities in the New York Times. My plan is to take two weeks in early fall for a visit to N.Y. for whatever interviews I can arrange, and then to move permanently as soon thereafter as possible.

[hw] Stan

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Conversation with Stan Brakhage, 11/30/96

Scott MacDonald: I understand that there was a break between you and Amos Vogel because he would not show *Anticipation of the Night* (1958) at Cinema 16. Is that true? What was your experience with Cinema 16?

Stan Brakhage: Well, that's true about Amos and *Anticipation*. But it wasn't as simple as that. I mean all along, Amos was the one hope. He had an audience of five thousand people to whom he would show works that my friends and I regarded as art. That was wonderful, but he showed the films we admired in a mix with scandal movies and documentaries of various shocking subjects. In a way, Cinema 16 programs often didn't look all that different to me from the newsreels I had attended as a child during the Second World War.

Amos's main concern and consideration was to show things that you couldn't see elsewhere, and that was what attracted his audiences. They felt very special; they were seeing things that weren't allowed into the local neighborhood theaters and later that you couldn't see on television: censored things, sexual subject matter, dog heads kept alive on tables in Russian laboratories—a mix into which was stirred some of the great American independent films.

Of course, the independent filmmakers felt Amos wasn't showing enough of *their* work and other work that they felt related to, and they often felt like they were being used in a freak show environment. In fact, the book Amos finally wrote [*Film As a Subversive Art*] does show the freak show sensibility he had about film.

When the 1958 Brussels World's Fair showings of American independent film occurred, I went to Amos to get money to buy a ticket so I could go to the events. So at that point I was still friendly with Amos and Marcia, and *am* still friendly with them. I think of them *very* affectionately. And that permits me to be not too angry that Amos couldn't go as far as *Anticipation of the Night*. At that point, he just couldn't see it. His view was that the film would destroy my reputation. I didn't see that I was having any kind of reputation anyway, but in any case, *Anticipation* was the end for Amos. But, again in fairness to Amos, it was also the end for Parker Tyler and for many other people. They said, "Okay, that's it: Brakhage has gone completely crazy and this is just degenerate work"—not "degenerate" because of subject matter, but formally.

MacDonald: I can certainly see how Amos, audience-aware as he was, would have trouble with the film. He didn't program to make his audiences happy, but he

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Brakhage: Ol shown. People

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At that point, was distributi and Adolfo v came to an ag began. Jonas I were: they w



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