

millennium

FILM WORKSHOP INC.

46 GREAT JONES STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y. 10002

4TH FLOOR

DIRECTOR:

Howard Guttenplan

ASSISTANT DIRECTORS:

Abe Likwornik

Jack Ebratt

Christopher Foster

Kristina Foster

Gary Smith

Fred Safran

Neil Reznikoff

Brief History of the Personal Cinema Series

by Howard Guttenplan

- *Started in Fall of 1966 by filmmaker, Ken Jacobs- who was also the Director of the newly established Millennium Film Workshop- one part of the St. Marks Church Arts Project on the lower East Side of N.Y.C.
- *First held at St. Marks Church on Sunday afternoons-located at East 10th Street and 2nd Ave.
- *About March of 1967 the Millennium broke its ties with the St. Marks Church and became completely independent. It switched its film programs to the Washington Square Methodist Church on West 4th Street near 6th Ave. in the West Village.
- *These programs were generally well attended. Most of the outstanding independent filmmakers in the N.Y.C. area were showing and discussing their films.
- *In late 1967 Ken Jacobs quit as active Director of the "Film-Studies" and as Director of the Millennium as a whole.
- *He was replaced by Steve Heimel as Program Director of the Film Series and George Tennille as Director of the Millennium.
- *In Dec. of 1967 the Millennium moved its Film Series to the Cinematheque theatre on 41st. The showings were held on Saturday afternoons. In early 1968 they were moved to the Cinematheque's new theatre in the SoHo area of lower Manhattan- 80 Wooster St. The film programs were first held Sunday afternoons and then on Tuesday evenings.
- *The format was broadened to include film critics, representatives from the American Film Institute and the Director of a "Sexexploitation film."
- *In Feb. of 1968, Howard Guttenplan became Co-Director of the Film Studies. Heimel and Guttenplan alternated from week to week in planning and running the film programs.
- *In the Summer of 1968, Heimel left the Millennium and Howard Guttenplan became the sole Program Director.
- *Also in the summer of 1968 the Cinematheque Theatre had to close down and cease its film showings because of license and other problems with the city.
- *There were no Film-Studies programs in the Fall of 1968.
- *The Millennium funds began to run low at this time.

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- *Some basic organizational problems began to become apparent.
- *At this time George Tennille quit as Director and was replaced by Gary Smith who was the Assistant Director.
- *It should be pointed out that Directors, Instructors, etc. all worked for no pay. This was the case since the Millennium became independent in Mar. of 1967.
- *In Nov. of 1968 the Millennium started a full-scale search for a new location for its workshop and a place for its Film-Studies programs. It had been at 2 East 2nd Street since early 1967.
- *Just as its money was almost depleted the Millennium received a \$5,000 grant from the Peg Santvoord Foundation.
- *At about the same time a new and better location for the workshop was found a few blocks away at 46 Great Jones Street. The organization moved in on Jan. 1, 1969.
- *The massive job of getting the loft in shape was started immediately. For about 2 months a group of volunteers designed and built and scraped and painted. In March of 1969 classes were started in the loft that had been divided up into an editing room/classroom, a storeroom, and a studio/screening area.
- *It was decided to have our Film Series at our own place. A projection booth was set up and a number of chairs were purchased.
- *On March 16 the Film-Studies Film Series was resumed at 46 Great Jones Street. With the Cinematheque out of business at 80 Wooster Street the Millennium became just about the only showcase for independent, avantgarde cinema in the Village, and N.Y.C. for that matter.
- *At about this time, mid-March, Gary Smith became loaded down with too much work as the Director of the Millennium and the head of a newly formed organization of Artists called "Museum". He decided to resign as Director of the Millennium. He was replaced by Howard Guttenplan, who was also the Program Director of the revived Film-Studies.
- *Guttenplan instituted a number of new procedures in order to make the Film Series more vital and at the same time self-supporting financially.
- *These measures included: Asking for contributions of \$1.50 (\$1.00- for workshop members) instead of open donations; Placing larger and better designed advertisements in the "Village Voice", Printing up attractive handbills of each seasonal series as well as for individual film programs and mailing these out and putting them up

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around town; getting the best possible staff to put the film programs on; Trying to get the best possible projection and sound systems within our financial means; and finally and most important of all-trying to put together a balanced series of film showing reflecting different viewpoints and attitudes of many creative independent filmmakers.

*In the Spring of 1969 about 14 One-Man and One-Woman film shows and about 13 Group film shows were put on. We had our first very large overflow crowd at the new place on May 4th for Carolee Schneemann and her film "Fuses".

*The Film Series resumed in the Fall of 1969 with many outstanding people coming in to show their films and rap with the audience. Attendance began to rise and we had enough income from our half of the gate to pay our advertising and other costs in putting on the programs. In other words we were operational and not losing money.

*To backtrack a bit, it was decided to split the contributions with the filmmakers 50-50. This seemed to be the fairest way. The Millennium only asked to break even.

*The Millennium at this point had run out of its grant money and was completely self-supporting; the entire operation was being run with its own income-50% of the gate, monthly workshop fees and membership dues.

*Starting in late 1969 and continuing through 1970, filmmakers were brought in from out of town just for the Film-Studies showing; Sharits came in from Maryland, Galsworth from Chicago, Dick Lerman from Mass., Heinz from Chicago, Lawder from Yale-Conn., Ungerer from Goddard College in Vermont and Sharits is coming in again, this time from Antioch College in Ohio.

*In Sept. of 1970 the Millennium received a grant of \$15,500 from the New York State Council on the Arts with \$4,000 earmarked for the Personal Cinema Program. We had asked the State Council for funds so we could pay filmmakers higher fees. We argued that film artists are important members of society and should be paid the same kind of wages that plumbers and electricians get. We tried to set a new precedent by asking for State money so we could pay each film artist giving One-Man film program and discussion-\$300.

*It turned out that they gave us part of what we asked for so now we will be able to pay each filmmaker between \$120-\$170 per show, depending on attendance. We continue to give 50% of the gate and then we add a set fee from the New York State Council money.

*This past Fall we switched our shows from Sun. to Sat. and as a

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result attendance and income rose.

*The Winter Series is about set with some very ^{ACCOMPLISHED &} well known people coming down to do film programs- Vanderbeek, Emshwiller, Nelson, Sharits, Baillie and others.